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James B. Gallie.

~~AUGIER DE MARIGNY, François~~



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THE
HISTORY
OF THE
ARABIANS,

Under the GOVERNMENT of the

CALIPHS.

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HISTORY
OF THE
ARABIANS,

Under the GOVERNMENT of the
CALIPH S,
FROM
MAHOMET, their FOUNDER,
TO THE
Death of MOSTAZEM, the fifty-sixth and
last Abassian CALIPH;

Containing the Space of Six Hundred Thirty-six Years.
With NOTES, Historical, Critical, and Explanatory :
Together with
GENEALOGICAL and CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES;
and a Complete INDEX to each Volume.

BY THE
ABBE DE MARIGNY.

Translated from the FRENCH,
With ADDITIONAL NOTES.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

Printed for T. PAYNE, at the Mews-Gate, in Castle-
Street, near St. Martin's-Church; and D. WILSON and
T. DURHAM, at Plato's-Head, in the Strand. 1758.

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Author's Preface.

THOUGH the moderns (and my countrymen in particular) are very commonly branded with the reproach of being trifling and insignificant, yet it is evident they are far from wanting a taste for what is truly good and useful. If works of fancy, and of pure amusement, have met with the greatest success, works calculated for instruction and improvement have met with the kindest reception. The course of the former has indeed been rapid, but almost ever of short duration. Like lightning, they dart forth only a transitory flame; of which, for the most part, not the least vestige remains. Whereas the latter have passed on with a steady, firm, and continual pace: and time, far from destroying, has only rendered them more valuable.

This is evidently proved by a great number of productions, which have been written with a view as well to improve the mind, as to better the heart, which are equally recommendable for correctness of style, and rectitude of morals. Such, amongst others, is the antient history of the famous Mr.

Rollin, of which the whole world knows the success. I name that author in particular, because in conducting the work I now publish, I proposed him for my model, though without daring to hope I should attain his perfection.

That learned man, full of merit, and worn out by years and labour, having finished his course before he had accomplished his undertaking, the world was earnestly desirous it might be continued. And the wishes of the public have been in great measure fulfilled, as well by the continuation of the Roman history, which has been written with great applause by one * of the most famous disciples of that great man, and the worthy inheritor of his eminent talents; as by that part of the ancient history † relating to Persia the adjacent countries, which is now writing by ‡ another author, well known amongst the learned for the correct map which he drew of the several states and empires of the universe. In the latter history will be shewn what passed in the East for the space of 500 years,

* Mr. Cr vier, senior professor of eloquence in the university of Paris.

† In this history may be seen at one view, the rise, increase, different conditions, duration, dismemberings and end of all the kingdoms, empires, republics, and great nations who have made a figure in the world, from the dispersing of mankind after the deluge to the present times.

‡ Mr. Barbeau de la Bruyere.

The P R E F A C E.

during the reign of two great families that governed Persia and other countries, from the time the Parthians revolted against the successors of Alexander the Great, to the reign of Izdegerd, the last king of the family of Artaxares, who was dethroned by the mahometan Arabians, about the 640th year of the christian Æra. That work may serve as an introduction to the present performance, and both of them will form no improper sequel to Mr. Rollin's history.

When first I entertained thoughts of engaging in this work, I conceived a much more extensive plan, and intended to have wrote a general history of the Arabians, on which I had for a long time bent my study, and for which I had collected very ample materials. But when I began to digest them in order to frame my history, I met with the greatest obstacles. In reviewing the collections I had faithfully made from such Arabian authors as have been translated into our tongue, I found that most of those writers contradicted each other, and my difficulty was increased through want of a competent knowledge of Arabic, which made it impossible for me either to consult such originals as had been translated, whereby I might have discovered whether the fault was in the author or translator, or to make a proper enquiry into the many other Arabian histories we are now possessed of,

in which I might have found the means of reconciling the difference.

I depended upon being furnished with great helps from the *Bibliothèque Orientale*, written by Mr. d'Herbelot, a work which might indeed have fully answered my expectations, if the author, who was a perfect master of the Arabian tongue, had had time to revise his performance, if he had given it the finishing stroke, and could have directed the press ; but that great man dyed too soon, and the materials he had collected for his design, were only ranged in alphabetical order, with little care or propriety. And as this work came out without the least examen or criticism, it is no better than a compound of blunders and contradictions, which perplex and weary out every reader desirous of instruction.

It must however be owned, that we have no better performance of the kind in our language, to which we can have recourse : And that it may still be useful notwithstanding its defects ; but the man that would discover and avail himself of the treasures it contains, must study it with the care and nicety of a critic, and take as a guide some unexceptionable author, by whose assistance he may be enabled to make proper distinctions.

This was the method I pursued, having chosen for my guide, in great measure, the learned history of the Patriarchs of Alexandria,

dria, published by the Abbot Renaudot; a work in which that learned man has given a pretty full extract of the history of the Saracens, or mahometan Arabians, from the time of Mahomet, till the destruction of the Caliphs by the Tartars.

That author, who is so deeply skilled in all kinds of literature, and so well versed in the study of languages, confirmed the suspicion I had justly entertained in perusing the *Bibliothèque Orientale*. Though he was much the authors friend, and highly respected his talents and merit, he speaks but disadvantageously of his work *; and has informed the public what precautions ought to be taken in reading him. He greatly regrets that Mr. d'Herbelot had not time to revise it, and is convinced that if his care and exactness in the performance had equalled his skill and knowledge, it would have been the most perfect thing in its kind.

But Mr. d'Herbelot is not the only writer, whom Mr. Renaudot accuses of want of

* Unde monitos lectores velim, ne si quæ illis occurrant aliter tradita quam a nobis factum est, de fide & diligentia nostra dubitent; presertim si quæ in nupera *Bibliotheca Orientali* viri clarissimi, amici nostri, Bartholomæi Herbelotii de istis rebus leguntur, cum nostra narratione comparent. Absit sane ut viro doctissimo, quem ut magistrum semper suspeximus, laudis aliquid detractum velimus: Plura sane & meliora longe prestare in hoc litterarum genere potuisset quam in opere illo posthumo, in quo licet multa reconditæ eruditionis reperiantur, tamen non pauca sunt quæ emendaturus erat, si supervixisset. *Hist. Patriarch. Alexand.* page 539.

exactness in respect to the Arabian history. He goes much farther back, and shews that even many original authors have been mistaken, and have not faithfully related the history of their country. He complains particularly of El Makin *, and proves that this author was the cause of many of the mistakes which several writers, and in particular Mr. d'Herbelot †, were guilty of in their performances.

The sight of so many rocks and sands made me steer with the greatest caution. Insomuch that instead of undertaking a general history of the Arabians, I have confined myself to treat of those people only from that period when they became subject to monarchical government under Mahomet and his successors. And though original authors do not always agree as to many of the facts and dates, I have, however,

* El Makin wrote a history, or rather a chronicle, of the Mahometan Caliphs from Mahomet to Mostader, the forty seventh Caliph. We have quoted him sometimes in this history, under that name, when we have made use of some passages extracted from the French translation of that work by Vazier. He calls him only Macine.

† Nuper alius magni sane inter litteratos nominis, nobisque, dum viveret, conjunctissimus, Bartholomæus Herbelotius, illam retulit ex El Macino in Bibliothecam Orientalem suam absque ulla censura. Quamvis autem neminem fortasse in his peregrinis litteris doctiorem nostra aut superior ætas viderit, tamen quia collectanea illa quæ in alphabetum digesta sunt, caruerunt postrema authoris emendatione, non majorem habent auctoritatem quam a scriptoribus ex quibus illa desumpsit: Hic autem non alium quam Elmacinum nominat. Hist. Patriarch. Alexand. pag. 483.

observed

observed that in respect to the series of Mahomet's successors, as well as to the many revolutions which have frequently changed the face of the sarazenical empire, the account of writers is nearly the same. I concluded therefore, I might safely undertake such part of the arabian history, in the execution of which, I shall describe no more than is already confirmed by the concurrent opinion of authors; and shall leave it to those who have more learning, time, and patience, to execute a more compleat and extensive work.

This history, so framed, will also in some sort accomplish the design which has been formed of continuing the works of the celebrated Mr. Rollin. That learned man having no other view, but to instruct the generality of readers, and especially the younger part of mankind, declined engaging in intricate enquiries, which were fit for the learned alone, and could avail only such as were desirous to become perfect masters of a history. In this performance, as well as in his work, the reader will meet with frequent revolutions, thrones subverted, sovereigns made the sport of fortune, abject slaves become masters of a crown and form powerful dynasties, which take rise, and are successively destroyed with the same facility. Amazing effects of the dark councils of the supreme Being, in whose hands are all
2 4 thrones

The P R E F A C E.

thrones and dominions, and who gives and takes them away according to his will.

Such is the prospect offered to the readers view, by the history of the Arabians under the several princes who ruled over of them, from the time of the first establishment of monarchical government amongst them.

The life of Mahomet, founder of their religion and empire, will be a suitable introduction to this work. The abridgment I have given of it, is indeed very concise, but is however sufficient to shew the great genius of that extraordinary man, who without the least advantage of education or study, imposed upon the people, and formed a party so powerful as to enable him to change the face of the government and religion of his country, and to be appointed at the same time the king and high priest of his nation.

The beginning of his pretended mission was very tempestuous. The inhabitants of Mecca, amongst whom he had endeavoured to propagate his enthusiastic doctrine, declared against him, and even threatened they would put him to death. Being obliged to fly, in order to avoid the pursuit of his enemies, he got safe to Medina; where he preached more boldly than ever. And being encouraged by the persecution begun against him at Mecca, he artfully made a merit of it. And that the extremity to which he was reduced, may never be forgotten, his disciples afterwards formed a famous epocha, which still
subsists

subsists in a great part of the world, where the doctrine of that false prophet is professed. That epocha is called the Hegyra, which according to the force of the Arabian word signifies flight or retreat. I shall have occasion to speak of this in the sequel of my Preface, and shall shew how it may be made to agree with the Christian *Æra*.

No sooner had the new legislator established himself in Medina, than he armed his profelites, and marched in an hostile manner to Mecca, which he brought under his obedience. That conquest was soon followed by the subduing of the three Arabias. The ancient government was totally changed; and no law observed but that of the conqueror. Being master of his own country, he sought to propagate his religion, and extend his dominions by arms. He formed the design of seizing Syria, then possessed by the Greeks; and actually commenced a war against that people; but death stopped him in his career: his followers resumed his enterprize, and the rapidity with which they carried it into execution had almost the appearance of a prodigy.

Mahomet dying without leaving any male issue or naming a successor, the rising empire of the Arabians was threatened with ruin through dissentions, which arose amongst the mahometan chieftains. Ali, who was the prophet's cousin, and also his son in law, having espoused Fatima his daughter,
laid

laid claim to the crown : They were ready to come to blows ; but at last the storm was laid, and they agreed to acknowledge for sovereign Abubecre, whose daughter, called Aïesha, was Mahomet's best beloved wife.

The great veneration they had for the founder of the state, prevented his successors from assuming any pompous title : It was their desire (if I may be allowed the expression) that he should reign for ever over the nation ; and therefore such as afterwards possessed the throne, were contented with the title of Caliph, that is to say vicar or successor. Abubecre was the first prince who bore that title, and with his reign this History properly begins.

That potentate reigned only two years ; in which short space he quelled many factions that arose in Arabia. He at the same time prosecuted Mahomet's designs against the Grecians. He entered their territories, and possessed himself of part of Syria. Omar, his successor, completed the conquest of that country. Soon after this his generals marched into Egypt, and made themselves masters of that vast province. Othman, who was the next Caliph, trod in his predecessors steps, and signalized his reign by feats of arms. On the one hand, the Saracens invaded the isle of Cyprus, and on the other, they made an irruption into the kingdom of Persia, subdued that people and brought them under obedience to the Caliphs.

Oth-

Othman was assassinated, Ali at last attained the empire, and gained a great name, for which however he is rather indebted to the bigotry of his followers, than to any real merit in himself. The Persians, for instance, and some other people, have the greatest veneration for that Caliph. They look upon him to be the only true successor of Mahomet: In consequence of which, they refuse to acknowledge the three first Caliphs that preceded him. They are extravagant in their praises of that prince's good qualities, and look upon him to be one of the greatest monarchs that ever swayed the arabian scepter.

But I must own, I never met with any thing in history to countenance the opinion they would have us entertain of that prince. Not a single act is therein recorded which shews the great Man: On the contrary, he appears to be of an unsteady, turbulent disposition, inconsistent in what related to himself, and much more unsettled in what concerned others. The very moment the prophet his father in law was dead, he began to cabal, in order to obtain the caliphship. His ambition made him swallow the grievous disappointment he met with in seeing the three immediate successors of Mahomet invested with that dignity. It is even asserted he was concerned in the conspiracy which brought Othman to his end; and yet when after the death of the latter, an offer was made to Ali of the crown he had so eagerly

eagerly sought after, that prince refused it, and even at the last accepted it with the most remarkable reluctance. He had no sooner ascended the throne, than he quarrelled with every one, and alienated their affections to so great a degree, that he was obliged to quit his capital, and fix the seat of the caliphship in another place.

The suspicion they harboured that this prince was a party to the plot for assassinating Othman, was made use of as the pretext for a revolt which broke out in Syria. Moavias who had been appointed governor of that province by Othman, was resolved to revenge the death of his benefactor. He declared Ali to be unworthy of reigning, refused to acknowledge him, caused himself to be proclaimed as the only lawful Caliph, and fixed his seat at Damascus.

In vain did Ali strive against his rival. He took up arms: He was defeated, and thought himself happy that by means of a treaty he could secure the possession of the title and prerogatives of Caliph in Arabia. He was soon afterwards assassinated, and left two sons, on the eldest of whom the Arabians bestowed the crown.

Hassan, for so that prince was named, (who was more unfortunate, but far from being so capable as his father) could not bear up against the practices of Moavias; inso-much that after having reigned six months, he consented to resign the scepter which he

was

was not worthy to wield. Moavias then became sole possessor of the throne, was acknowledged by all Mussulmen as the true and lawful Caliph, and was the first of the famous dynasty of the Ommiyans, so called from Ommiyah the head of that prince's family.

So soon as Moavias was in quiet possession of the throne, his first care was to set about the increase of his glory. He prosecuted those entreprizes which the former Caliphs had begun against the Greeks. He drove them out of Armenia and Anatolia, and beat them back even to Constantinople. He then took measures to make the dignity of Caliph hereditary, which had been before elective, and succeeded in his design; his crown descended to his son, and afterwards to the rest of his posterity.

That dynasty of princes maintained themselves with great glory during fifteen successions, though not always in a right line, for brothers often ascended the throne to the prejudice of their nephews, when the latter were not of due age, or there were any other reasons to set them by the crown; but the succession was always in the house of Ommiyah till the time of Mervan the second, who was one of the most illustrious and unfortunate princes of that family.

The destruction of the Ommiyans was wrought by the Abassians, princes who were so called because they descended from
Abbas,

Abbas, Mahomet's uncle. For the better executing their design, they made use of the same pretext as had been employed by the Ommyians to invade the crown. The latter had declared against Ali for joining in the assassination of Othman ; and the Abassians took up arms against the Ommyians, to revenge the death of Ali, who, they alleged had been murdered by them : So they fixed themselves upon the throne, and secured the possession thereof by means of that horrid massacre which is described in the beginning of the third volume of this history.

According to some authors, two princes escaped from that bloody butchery. One of whom established himself in a corner of Arabia, where he pretty quietly enjoyed the title of Caliph, but without the least authority, save only in a very small extent of territory. He formed a kind of dynasty, which subsisted till about the sixth century of the Christian æra. The other escaped into Spain, and was acknowledged as Caliph by the mahometan Arabians, who had conquered part of that province. His descendants reigned after him, and maintained themselves upon the throne about three hundred years, that is to say, till the Almora-vides conquered Spain.

The Abassians, who called themselves the true children of the house of the prophet, as descending from Haschem and Abdalmotalieb,

leb, who were nearly related to Mahomet, possessed the diadem for more than five hundred years, under thirty seven princes, whose history fills the third and fourth volumes of this work. The seat of their empire was originally at Cufah. Almanzor, the second Caliph of that dynasty, translated it to Hascemia: But having met with an insult there, he formed a resolution of building the city of Bagdat, which was the capital of the empire till the race of Abbas became extinct. Motasssem, one of the Caliphs of that family, resolved to remove the imperial seat to Samarath; but it was only for a few years, after which he returned to Bagdat, which continued to the end the chief seat of the Caliphs. For that cause the Abassians are commonly called Caliphs of Bagdat, as the Ommiyans have been generally stilled Caliphs of Syria, on account of their constant abode in that country.

The ruin of the house of Ommiyah, was solely owing to the unlimited authority with which they intrusted the governors of their provinces: The descendants of Abbas fell into the same error, by which means their power was greatly diminished. However they supported their dynasty longer than the Ommiyans; but with less splendor in respect to the extent of their authority.

During their reigns part of the empire was at several times granted away, and the territories so dismembered were erected into

as many different dynasties. Of these were the Thaherians, and the Soffarides who reigned in Persia, Tranfoxstana and Turkestan : As also the Tholonides and Aschidians who ruled Ægypt under the title of Sultans, though at the same time they acknowledged the supremacy of the Caliph of Bagdat.

But the Aschidians were succeeded by the Fatimites, who pretending to be the rightful successors of Mahomet, as descended from Ali by Fatima, daughter of that prophet, procured themselves to be declared sovereigns in Ægypt, and boldly assumed the title of Caliph. From thenceforth the name of the Caliphs of Bagdat was suppressed in the public prayers throughout the whole extent of their dominions. The coin of the country was no longer struck with their effigy ; and that new dynasty possessed the full and entire sovereignty for almost three hundred years, at which time the Caliphs recovered the possession of Egypt ; I mean, that they were acknowledged as sovereigns of that country, and received kingly honours, but without the least real authority.

And indeed their power was not greater at home. The imprudence of some of the Abassians, who had introduced at their court a foreign militia, had principally contributed to abase the dignity of Caliph. Those troops which were drawn out of Turkestan, and who are mentioned in this history by the name of Turkish militia, soon
made

made an ill use of the favour which the Caliph shewed them. By insensible degrees they usurped the whole power, insomuch that they deposed the vizirs and even the Caliphs. In time they were brought to obedience ; though thereby the latter obtained no increase of power. And the ministers of those princes discovering the weakness of their sovereigns, soon reduced them to the same slavish yoke they had been endeavouring to shake off.

One of the Abassians sought to curb the insolence of those ministers, by creating a dignity superior to that of the vizirs, namely the post of emir-al omara, that is to say, commander of commanders. Thereby the vizirship was as it were annihilated ; but the Caliphs were still slaves, and the state was more troubled than ever, by the intrigues and practices of such as aspired to that high dignity. This was the source of the continual wars carried on by the princes of the several dynasties which arose in the provinces that had been absolutely granted by the Caliphs. Each of them laid claim to the post of emir. By turns they possessed it, and supplanted each other. They seized the temporal authority into their hands, and left those princes only the empty title of sovereign. And of this a particular account will be given when I come to treat of the great commotions which were excited by the Baridians, the Hamadanes

danites, the Boudans, the Gaznevites, the Khouarezmiens, and especially by those famous princes of Turkestan, so well known by the name of the Selgiucidæ.

Whilst these powers are destroying each other, a new one will be seen to arise and gain its ends, which is the dynasty of the Atabecks, to whom the Caliphs of Bagdat owed the destruction of the Egyptian Fatimites ; after whose ruin Syria and Egypt became again subject to the Abassians. This great undertaking, which was projected by the Atabeck Nouredin (called in our histories Noradin) was carried into execution by the famous Salaheddin, or Saladin, as western writers call him. That prince attained the sultanhip of Egypt, and became head of the dynasty of the Aioubites, which was in the end extirpated by the Mammelukes, turkish slaves, whose posterity Salaheddin had formed into a militia.

During the reign of that prince and his descendants, all Christendom was engaged in the useless expedition of the crusades. I have given only a summary account of the beginning of those wars, during the reign of the Fatimites, for as it was not my intent to treat particularly of those Caliphs, I avoided enlarging upon the occurrences during their reign. But from the time they were extinct, I have given a full account of the sequel of those wars ; for as Syria and Egypt
again

again became subject to the Abassians, it made part of my history.

At the very time the East was rent by these divisions, a new dynasty arose much more formidable than any of the preceding, which were called Genghis-kanians, from Genghis-kan the founder of the dynasty. This prince, so highly renowned on account of the rapidity of his exploits, fell like a torrent on that country at the head of his Moguls and Tartars, and soon conquered an immense tract of land. His successors, who inherited his bravery, as well as his hatred to the Mussulmen, added to their crown almost all the states which had been seized by the princes of the other dynasties, who till that time had been so powerful ; and at last they made themselves masters of Bagdat, massacred the Caliph and his children, and by their death put an end to the illustrious house of Abbas, which had sat on the throne for above five hundred years.

At this period the history properly concludes. And if it does not contain a relation of every matter of importance which concerned the mahometan Arabians, it may very justly be asserted, that I have not advanced a single fact but from authors of undoubted credit and veracity. The reader will find (amongst other things) a particular and just account of the several houses or dynasties which became famous amongst that
b 2 people,

people, as also of their rise, increase, decay, and end.

In respect to the general character of that nation, I could wish such authors as I have read, had afforded me the means of contradicting the opinion we have always entertained of the arabian Saracens. I have just mentioned in the introduction to this work, that we were mistaken in regard to those people, and that the barbarity which we usually attributed to them, was solely the effect of prejudice. But it will be manifest from this history, that we have done them no great injustice. And in truth, under what dynasty soever we consider them, we shall always find that crueity is the basis of their character.

It must however be agreed that some instances of clemency, courtesy and humanity, appear in the time of such princes as undertook to regulate the government, and soften and convert the savage minds of the people ; but such instances are rare, and amount not to prove that they were generally possessed of those amiable qualities ; and it would be imprudent to form a judgment of a nation on account of a few temporary virtues, which may have shewn themselves during the brightest reigns ; since their general conduct alone can enable us to pass a right sentence. Now it does not appear that the Arabians have attained any great perfection in that particular. They are, in
my

my judgment, nearly the same under the Abassians as under the Ommiyans; and if any difference appears, it is not to their credit. This we may perceive by the characters of the very princes who possessed the throne. The Abassians, who were full as fierce and cruel as the Ommiyans, were however far beneath them in point of conduct and courage. Some few of their princes were martial: but the most of them either never conducted an army, or shewed their want of skill and soldiership. They were unable to preserve unbroken that noble inheritance in which the Ommiyans maintained themselves with so great honour, and during their reign the dignity of Caliph fell into the greatest contempt, and at last was totally destroyed.

With regard to the sciences, it must be confessed that the Arabians made a most amazing progress therein. It was however late ere they began to cultivate them, though the fire and vivacity of their genius rendered them very apt for the purpose. The truth is, that the first Caliphs were utterly ignorant of every thing save the Alcoran and the art of war. The Ommiyans are also reputed to have had no greater share of knowledge; but under the government of the descendants of Abbas, a taste for the sciences prevailed through the whole nation, and men of learning appeared on every side, who being favoured and protected by the

princes, were improving arts and sciences, and composing works in different kinds of literature. I cannot give a juster idea of the progress which letters then made amongst that people, than by quoting at length a passage from an excellent treatise written by the Abbé de Fleury *.

“ It is high time, says that famous writer, to lay aside the vulgar opinion, that all Mahometans, without distinction, are avowedly ignorant. They have had an incredible number of men famous for learning and knowledge, particularly of Arabians and Persians; and they have wrote enough to furnish very large libraries. In the twelfth century, which is the time I am speaking of, they had been already studying with great application for more than four hundred years; and study was never carried to a higher pitch amongst them, than when it was sunk to the lowest ebb amongst us, that is to say, in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Those Arabians, I mean all such as called themselves Mussulmen, of what nation, and in what country soever they were, followed two kinds of study; one, which was proper to them, and another which they borrowed from the Greeks, who were subjects to the emperors of Constantinople.

“ Their proper study was in the first place religion, that is the Alcoran; the traditions which they attributed to Mahomet and his

* Du choix des études.

first disciples; the lives of their pretended saints, and the fables they related of them; cases of conscience touching the practice of their religion, as prayer, purifications, fasts, pilgrimages, and their school-divinity; which latter contains so great a number of questions, upon the attributes of God, upon predestination, the last judgment, and the succession to the prophet, that they have given rise to many sects amongst them, who treat each other as heretics.

“ Others studied the Alcoran and its commentaries rather as lawyers than divines, namely, to furnish themselves with precedents for determining their differences and disputes. For that book is their only law, even in matters temporal. Others again applied themselves to the study of their history, which had been carefully written, from the commencement of their religion and empire, and continued down from time to time. But they had not the least knowledge of any history more ancient than their own government, despising all mankind who were before Mahomet, and calling all those days, the days of ignorance, because they did not know their religion. They were contented with the antiquity of the Arabians, contained in the works of their ancient poets, which served them for a history of those times. In which it cannot be denied, they followed the same principle

with the ancient Greeks, of cultivating their own traditions, how fabulous soever they might be.

“ But it must also be acknowledged that the beauties of their poetry were ever merely superficial, consisting only in liveliness of fancy, and boldness of expression. They did not apply themselves to that kind of poetry which consists in imitation, and is the best calculated to move the passions : and probably their contempt of the arts which bear a relation to it, as painting and sculpture, (which they abhor through hatred to idolatry) might induce them to reject the same. Their poets were also useful in the study of the arabian tongue, which was then the language of the learned, and of most part of the people in that great empire, which is still chiefly the vulgar tongue, and is, through the whole, the language of their church. They generally studied it out of the Alcoran ; and in order to learn the current meaning of it, the most inquisitive amongst them used to flock from all parts to the province of Irak, and particularly to the city of Basorah, which was the same amongst them, as Athens was to the Greeks. As at that time powerful princes sat on the throne of Persia, there were some writers also in that tongue, which has been since greatly polished. These studies were proper to the Arabians, and were coeval with their religion.

“ Those

“ Those which they borrowed from the Grecians were of later date by two hundred years. For it was about the year 820, that the Caliph Almamon requested the emperor of Constantinople, to send him the best books, which he caused to be translated into the arabian tongue. But it does not appear that they ever attempted to learn the grecian language. As it was the dialect of their enemies, nothing more was wanting to make them despise it. Besides, at that time there dwelt in Syria and in Egypt so many Christians who understood both the arabic and greek tongues, that they were at no loss for interpreters; the same Christians rendered greek authors into Syriac and Arabic, as well for their own use, as the Mahometans. Amongst the greek books, many were not calculated for the Arabians. They could not taste the beauties of a poet in a language which was foreign to them, of a quite different genius from their own, and which their religion made it a crime to read. They had moreover so utter a detestation for idolatry, that they did not think it lawful barely to name the heathen gods: and amongst the many thousand volumes they have written, scarce one can be found that makes the least mention of them. They were therefore very averse to the study of those fables, which have furnished so much employment

ment for modern poets : and the same kind of superstition might prevent them from reading foreign history, into which account may be taken the contempt they shew, as has been already observed, for every thing before the time of Mahomet. As to eloquence and politics, which take rise in the most free republics, the mahometan form of government rendered them quite useless. They were under a despotic empire, where they dared not open their mouths, save only to flatter their prince, and applaud his every thought ; where it was not their business to enquire what would be most advantageous to the state, or to learn the art of persuasion, but to study obedience to their master's will.

“ Therefore no other works of the antients could be useful to them, but such as treated of the mathematics, philosophy and physick. As they minded neither politics nor eloquence, Plato did not suit them ; besides, to have understood him well, a competent knowledge of the poets, religion, and history of the Greeks, was absolutely necessary. Aristotle fitted them much better with his logic and metaphysics ; and they studied him with incredible ardour and assiduity. They also applied themselves to his physics, but chiefly to the eight books which treat of physics in general : for such parts thereof in particular as require observation
and

and experiments, were not for their turn. Amongst other things the study of medicine was not forgotten; but they grounded it chiefly upon general reasons touching the four qualities or accidents, the constitution of the four humours, and upon some traditional remedies which they had not taken the trouble to examine, and which they blended with a heap of superstitious nostrums. As to anatomy, which came to them in a very imperfect condition from the Greeks, they made no progress in it. It is however certain we are obliged to them for chemistry, in which they made very great improvements, if they were not the inventors of it. But they also mixed with it those defects which we find so much difficulty to separate from it, even at this time, namely, vain promises, delusive arguments, superstitious operations, and whatsoever else has furnished out the whole race of quacks and impostors. From thence they easily fell into magic and all kinds of divination, which mankind naturally follow when they are strangers to physics, history, and true religion, as may appear from the example of the ancient Greeks. In this they received great assistance from astrology, which was the chief aim of their mathematical studies. In short, that deceitful science was in such high request under the mussulman empire, that princes made it their chief study, and
by

by its directions regulated their most important enterprizes. The Caliph Almaman himself drew up some astronomical tables, which were much celebrated ; and it must be allowed they were of great service to him in making observations, as well as in other useful parts of the mathematics, namely geometry and arithmetic. We are indebted to them for algebra, and the cypher to multiply by ten, which hath so greatly facilitated arithmetical operations. In respect to astronomy, they were masters of the same advantages as had incited the ancient Egyptians and the Chaldeans to prosecute that study, for they inhabited the same country ; and were also acquainted with all the observations made by those seniors, as likewise with all the additions the Grecians had made to them”.

Such was the state of the sciences in Arabia during the reign of the Abassians ; which I have endeavoured to exemplify by collecting such facts as seemed to be most worthy our notice. And now nothing remains but to speak of the arabian year, and of the manner in which the mahometan Hegyra may be made to agree with the christian æra.

The arabian year, like ours, consists of twelve months ; they are called, Moharram, Sefar, Rebiah the first, Rebiah the second, Giomada the first, Giomada the second, Regeb,

geb, Schaban, Ramadan, Shaval, Doulkâdah and Doulhégiah. These months are formed of thirty and twenty nine days alternately, that is to say, the first has 30 days, the second 29, the third 30, and so on. The whole number of these days, it will appear, form only lunar years, which are about eleven days shorter than solar years. They call them moveable months, because they fall out successively in every season of the year, going from the winter to autumn, from autumn to the summer, and then to the spring. Therefore, suppose for example their year began on the first day of January, three years afterwards it would begin on the first of December, in three years more in November, and so on.

In order to remedy that inconvenience, and fix the time of the pilgrimage of Mecca to autumn, which is the most convenient season, as well on account of the coolness of the weather, as because the fruits of the earth are then ripe and in plenty, the ancient Arabians made use of the intercalation which they had borrowed from the Jews; and every three years they added one month to the current year; by which means they became solar years. This reform was made long before Mahomet, and was in use at the time he began to establish his religion. But the new legislator, pretending that a year consisting of thirteen months was repugnant

pugnant to the divine laws, threw out the intercalary month, and re-established the former lunar and moveable year, such as the Mahometans observe to this very day.

Their year being, as I have observed, eleven days shorter than the solar year, it falls out that in 33 arabian years there are wanting 33 times eleven days, which make 363, and form nearly a solar year. So that by adding an intercalary year every 33 years, you may make the arabian year agree with our vulgar æra.

But it is necessary to observe further, in respect to the year of the mahometan Arabians, that they fixing their epocha at the year in which Mahomet fled from Mecca to Medina, and which happened the 621st year of Jesus Christ, in the month of July, it is necessary, in order to make the christian and Mahometan calendars agree, that 621 be added to the year of the Hegyra, which you would bring to the christian year; and that number added, a subtraction must be made from the quotient of as many units as there are 33 times in the whole. For example; in order to find by the 656th year of the Hegyra, that in the christian æra which answers to it, the number 621 must be added to the above number, which will make 1277; from thence must be deducted as many units as there are 33 times

times in 656, which is 19, and the remainder will be 1258, and that is the year in the christian æra, answerable to the 656th year of the Hegyra. But if, on the contrary, it be asked, what year of the Hegyra agrees with the christian year 1258, in the first place 621 must be deducted from that number, and there will remain 637; then as many units must be added to the same as there are 33 times therein, being 19, and the whole will amount to 656, which is the year of the Hegyra that agrees with the year 1258.

It must be observed, however, that this method is not perfectly exact, because the arabian year being unfixed, and beginning sometimes at one season, and sometimes at another, a year of the Hegyra may be reckoned as current which is not begun, or as just begun, when it is far advanced; but at most the error can amount only to a few months. Such as are desirous of a more exact and nice calculation, may consult the tables contrived by Riccioli for reducing the years of the Hegyra, to those of the christian æra. A calculation of which kind may be also found in the tables drawn up by the Abbé Lenglet.

ERRATA.

Page 13 line 14 for *fortune* read *fortunes*. P. 15 l. 3 from the bottom, for *defect* read *defeat*. P. 27 l. 3 delete. P. 31 l. 10 for *Iman* read *Imam*. Idem in the note l. 4 for *Abassides* read *Abassians*. P. 46 l. 3 from the bottom for *Hassa* read *Haffa*. P. 55 l. 23 for *zagal* read *zaceat*. P. 157 l. 2 from the bottom for *Hashah* read *Haffa*.

TABLE

THE
HISTORY
OF THE
ARABIANS,

Under the GOVERNMENT of the

CALIPH S.

TO so high a pitch have we carried our prejudices against the Arabians (that famous people, whose history I am now about to write) that we know little or nothing of them: and, from a persuasion that they are barbarians, and that their history can afford nothing either useful or entertaining, we have been very sparing (not to say negligent) in our inquiries touching that people, or their concerns.

And yet, I think, there is not a nation, since the fall of the Roman empire, that better deserves our knowledge; whether we consider the great men which have appeared amongst them, or the amazing progress they made in the arts and sciences for many centuries.

I shall not attempt to go so far back as the origin of that people; the clouds which cover it being so thick and dark, as to afford no hopes of discovering, with the least certainty, their rise, and extraction.

But as the Arabians were not on every account illustrious, till they were united under the same form of government; at that period I shall begin their history; and shall take no further notice of remote times, than may be necessary to give a short sketch of the country, and the people that inhabited the same.

I shall then give an abridgment of the life of the famous Mahomet, founder of their monarchy, by which the reader will find, that he was born among them; that he formed the bold project of subduing his country, and enlarging its bounds; that he became supreme head of a new religion; that he established a despotic sovereignty, which he transmitted to his successors; and that all these great events were brought about by enthusiasm and his sword alone.

A brief

*A brief account of Arabia, and its inhabitants,
before the time of Mahomet.*

ARABIA, one of the most considerable provinces of Asia, forms a peninsula, which is bounded by Syria and Palestine to the north-west; by the Persian gulf to the north-east; by the Indian sea to the south-east; and by the Red sea to the south-west.

Geographers divide it into three principal parts, namely, Arabia Fælix, Arabia Deserta, and Arabia Petrea.

Arabia Fælix, called Hiemen by the Arabs, reaches from the mountains, which separate it from the two other Arabias, to the ocean.

Arabia Deserta is nearest the continent. It is subdivided into three districts, called Thahamah, Jemamath, lying near the center of the country, and Hegiaz. The last of which provinces is most famous, on account of the cities of Mecca and Medina, which are situated therein.

Arabia Petrea, to which the Arabs have given the name of Hagi or Hagiari, which signifies a stone, is bounded by the Red sea and Egypt on the west; by Palestine and Syria on the north; by Arabia Deserta on the east; and on the south, by a chain of hills which separate it from Arabia Fælix. And in this province stands the mount Sinai,

and the mount of Oreb, so famous in scripture.

These several provinces were each of them governed by a king, the most considerable amongst whom were those of Hiemen, who reigned under the name of Hiemarite kings: their throne subsisted near two thousand years, and was overturned by the Æthiopians, who at last conquered Hiemen, and destroyed the Dynasty of the Hiemarites. Amongst the sovereigns of the other provinces, namely, of Hegiaz, Hendah, Hirah, and Gassan, some were remarkable for their conquests; the princes of Hirah, in particular, who extended their territories beyond the limits of Arabia; and that country afterwards bore the name of Arabian Irack, or Hirah, conquered by the Arabians. It was formerly a part of Chaldaea; the other part, which fell to the king of Persia, was called Persian Irack, at the time the Mahometans enlarged their conquests towards the east.

Some princes descended from one of those kings having penetrated into Syria, at the head of a numerous body of Arabians, fixed their habitation in a very pleasant and convenient place called Gassan, whence they were named Gassanides. They also bore the name of Hareth, of which the Greeks and Latins formed that of Areta. In the second epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, mention is made of one of those

those kings, of whom the Jews requested they might guard the gates of Damascus, in order to prevent St. Paul's escape.

That king Aretas had, by order of Augustus, succeeded the tyrant Silleeus, who had seized the Arabian throne, after putting to death Abodas, which Abodas came to the crown by the death of another Aretas, who was forced to pay tribute to the Romans, in order to secure the quiet possession of Arabia.

The Arabian princes were famous on account of the wars they had before waged with the Egyptians, the Persians, the kings of Assyria, and even against Alexander the Great, who totally subdued them: but they recovered their power during the wars which that prince's successors carried on against each other.

The Romans afterwards attacked them with success; and, if they did not absolutely conquer their country, yet the dependance under which they were held, differed very little from slavery. But this was not effected without meeting with as great a resistance, on the part of the Arabians, as could be expected from men of the stoutest courage.

By these means their government was much weakened. They had never been without kings, but they were rather heads of tribes than real sovereigns; at least, in respect to the extent of their power. The natural bravery of that people often in-

duced them to take up arms, to free themselves from the chains in which they were held by the Romans, and after them by the eastern emperors; insomuch that they met with a continual vicissitude of battles won and lost, until the seventh century of the christian æra; at which time Mahomet, by putting an end to the several tribes that formed so many governments, freed those people from every foreign yoke, to bring them under his own. Their laws, their customs, and their very religion, were abrogated, to make way for a new government, and a new worship, as will be made appear in the abridgment of the life of that famous legislator.

An abridgment of the life of Mahomet.

Birth of Mahomet.

MAHOMET, or as the Arabians pronounce the word, Mohamed, was born at Mecca about the end of the sixth century. His father was a Heathen, and his mother a Jew, and both of them were of the tribe of the Coraischites. That tribe was more eminent than the rest, on account of their having been long in possession of a very honourable employment.

To them belonged the guard and direction of a famous temple called the Caabah, that is to say, The square-house. This edifice, if the Alcoran may be credited, was raised to the honour of the true God, by Abraham

Abraham and Ishmael, and had been dedicated to the worship of idols ever since the introduction of Paganism amongst the Arabians. That place, formerly so noted on account of the devout pilgrimages made thereto by the heathen Arabians, is to this very day as remarkable for the pilgrimages of the Mahometans.

The superintendence of that temple had before belonged to the Khofaites, a famous tribe amongst the Arabians; but they had been deprived of it some time by Koffa, one of Mahomet's ancestors, who was chief of the tribe of the Coraischites; and who so firmly established his power, that he remained absolute master of the Caabah; and transmitted the government of it to his posterity, together with the principality of Mecca, which was a kind of appurtenance to that post.

The person who enjoyed that dignity when Mahomet came into the world, was called Abdal-Moutaleb, and amongst the many children he had, the most famous were Abdallah, Al-abbas, and Aboutaleb.

Abdallah, the eldest of them, was Mahomet's father; he died shortly after the birth of his son, whom he left under his mother's tuition: in a few years afterwards she also died, and Mahomet was left an orphan at about eight years of age, and in a very destitute condition.

Mahomet's
younger
days.

Aboutaleb, his father's brother, took charge of his education, and brought him up at his own house till he was twenty years of age. He then put him out to a widow, named Cadhiga, who was mistress of great riches, which her husband had gained by trade; and she then carried on commerce with the greatest success.

Mahomet was at first employed in the meanest offices; but in a short time he was so very assiduous, and gave proofs of so great a capacity, that Cadhiga made no scruple to trust him with the management of her whole trade, and thereby put all her fortune into his power.

Cadhiga ef-
pouses Ma-
homet.

Mahomet was true to the trust which Cadhiga reposed in him; trade flourished in his hands, riches increased apace, and all their undertakings were successful: and Cadhiga, being moved by a lively sense of gratitude to recompence his zeal and fidelity, thought she could do no less than bestow her person on him in marriage; which she performed accordingly.

Mahomet re-
solves the
project of a
new religion.

He continued to carry on trade for some years; and then finding himself master of immense riches, he formed the boldest project that ever entered the imagination of a private man: no less than the framing a new religion, and using proper means to establish and propagate it.

What gave
rise to the de-
sign.

About four years before he left off trade, he formed the first idea of his enthusiastic design.

design. The frequent voyages he was obliged to make into Syria, India, and other countries, had afforded him the means of being thoroughly acquainted with the manners, doctrine, and public worship of the people who inhabited those provinces. Christianity had once flourished there in its utmost purity; but was at that time so disguised by heresies of different kinds, as not to appear the same. Scarce a catholic Christian remained: the inhabitants of those regions were either Arians, Nestorians, or Manichees; and each of those sects had its doctors and divines. Mahomet contracted an acquaintance with them all; he took great delight in conversing with them, and gained a thoroughknowledge of their tenets, as well as of the reasons which had induced them to raise a schism against the Catholics. An information of this kind, insensibly led him to frame a new system of religion, on which he turned his whole thoughts from the moment he left off trade.

As Mahomet well knew the genius of his countrymen, he entertained the most sanguine hopes of succeeding in his enterprise. He was not ignorant, that the Arabians were naturally lively, and fond of novelty. Besides, the heat of the climate they dwelt in, made them addicted to illusions and enthusiasm: he had manifest proofs of it, from the great number of
different

different sects which had been introduced amongst that people by a strange mixture of Jews and Christians of all opinions; these however were but inconsiderable in comparison of Paganism, which appeared to be the established religion.

Mahomet
pretends to be
inspired.

When Mahomet had maturely weighed the chief articles of the worship he intended to establish, he made a trial of his mission in his own family: and as he was sensible that no religion would be looked on as true, unless it were founded on revelation, his first step was to make his wife believe he had an intimate correspondence with heaven.

The better to bring this about, he made an artful use of an infirmity he was subject to, which was the epilepsy. Mahomet very carefully obviated any objections Cadhiga might have made, on account of the fits with which she sometimes saw him attacked: he cautioned her not to form a wrong judgment of the convulsive state he often appeared in; that, far from being a disease, it was on the contrary a most signal favour of heaven; and was caused by the appearance of the angel Gabriel, and the inspirations the Almighty was pleased to honour him with by the ministry of that angel. Mahomet imparted to his wife all that (he pretended) was revealed to him, and then began to explain to her the main points of his new religion; according to which he asserted,

asserted, God was to be served and honoured by mankind.

Cadhiga, either believing, or feigning a belief, propagated the report, that her husband was a prophet and inspired. So uncommon a story at first gained no credit save in her own house, and with some of the lowest of the people, who being won by Mahomet's bounty, soon became zealous followers of that new apostle. Their warm imaginations made them readily assent to whatsoever they heard relating to Mahomet's converse with God; they looked on his epileptic fits as an incontestable evidence of his being inspired: and, in a short time, miracles were attributed to him. The ignorant vulgar, who are always attracted by what is new and marvelous, greedily swallowed each extraordinary tale that was told them, and the number of Mahomet's disciples became, by insensible degrees, so great, that the magistrates of Mecca resolved to make use of their authority, in order to stop the progress of their enthusiasm.

After a mature deliberation, the council judged it would be most prudent to seize the new prophet; to examine him touching his doctrine; and, if he made a free confession, to insist on his signing a formal recantation; otherwise to imprison him for the rest of his life.

Measures taken by the magistrates of Mecca to stop its progress.

The resolution of the magistrates was not kept so secret, but that it reached Mahomet's ear. As some of his followers were persons of note, and allied to the chief magistrates, the order of the council took wind, and the new legislator prevented its being put in execution by a speedy flight.

Mahomet flies.

He departed from Mecca in the night-time, and was accompanied in his retreat by many of his disciples, and in particular by Abubecre, who was one of chief note amongst them. The magistrates being informed of his escape, sent immediately in pursuit of him; but he found means to avoid their messengers, by travelling only after the night-fall, and shutting himself up in caves during the day-time.

He confirms his disciples in his doctrine.

Persecution, which seems formed to give credit and increase to every sect and belief, prepared the minds of those fugitives to receive a deeper impression of the new prophet's doctrine. The artful legislator, who was capable of turning each juncture to his advantage, made use of the time of his abode in those deep caverns*, to confirm his disciples in the principles of his religion.

* The abode of the prophet and his disciples in caverns, has been an inexhaustable fund of matter to his followers. They pretend that he did there a great number of miracles to attest the truth of his mission: but many of the most knowing writers of Arabia inform us, that the prophet often disowned those prodigies.

As he was naturally eloquent and pathetic, he made the most moving speeches to them, touching the obstacles which were raised by the malice of the devil, to the propagation of those tenets the Almighty had revealed by the ministry of his angel.

Their fancies being already heated and in great agitation, through the darkness and stillness of the place, which zeal for their false religion had obliged them to take shelter in, were fired by the force of his language. They all devoted themselves to his will, and took a solemn oath, to sacrifice their lives and fortune for him and his doctrine.

Mahomet, encouraged by the success of this first step, happily ended his journey, and arrived at last, with his whole train, at a city of Arabia Deserta, then called Yatreb, which name was afterwards changed for that of Medina-al-Nabi, which signifies, City of the prophet. It is also called barely Medina, that is to say, The city, as if it merited alone to be honoured with that name, for having afforded an asylum to the new legislator.

Mahomet goes to Medina.

To the time of this flight the followers of Mahomet have fixed their grand epocha, which they called Hegyra, that is to say, Flight or retreat. Thence they begin their common æra, which corresponds with the 622d year of the christian æra: but it must be observed, that their years are lunar, and consequently eleven days shorter than

Beginning of the Hegyra.

than solar years. Those eleven days, at the end of 33 years, amount to about a solar year; so that the 33d year of the Hegyra is but the 32d year since the commencement of that epocha.

When Mahomet arrived at Medina, he found a great number of profelytes, whom his emissaries had converted. His presence gave an additional weight to his doctrine, which he had before caused to be promulgated there. The masculine eloquence, and the insinuating and prophetic language of that new missionary, soon gained him so prodigious a crowd of disciples, that in a short time he found it was in his power to have troops under his command.

Mahomet
prepares to
attack the in-
habitants of
Mecca.

He then formed a design of chastising the inhabitants of Mecca, for the contempt they had shewn of his doctrine, and the necessity they had lain him under of shamefully quitting the place of his nativity. He concealed his revenge under the mask of religion; the sure way to render it more cruel. He therefore declared to his disciples, that he was sent from heaven, in an especial manner, for the conversion of the Arabians; that those people were sunk in the grossest idolatry; that measures must be taken to recover them from such a state; and that there were no other means of succeeding, but by marching against them sword in hand.

The

The prophet's design met with applause, and he soon saw ranged under his standard, a great number of disciples, ready to carry fire and sword whithersoever he pleased to send them.

Mahomet, highly pleased at this temper of his disciples, would not give it time to cool, but tried their courage by sending them out against a body of troops who had kept the field by order of the magistrates of Mecca, ever since the time of his escape. He gave the command of them to one of his uncles, named Hamza, whom he thought worthy his utmost confidence, on account of the warmth he had shewn for his doctrine. Besides, Hamza, to the blindest zeal joined the most consummate bravery, which fitted him for the command of a troop of enthusiasts. Of him therefore Mahomet made choice to head his followers, and delivered to him the standard of religion; and, after having charged them to pay an implicit obedience to such orders as Hamza should issue in his name, he caused them to march against the enemy.

But this expedition was not attended with success: the troops of Mecca gained the advantage, and totally routed Mahomet's disciples, who were glad to save themselves by a most disorderly flight to Medina.

This defect was so far from disconcerting them, that it spurred them on to take better measures against another occasion. They
were

were properly instructed in military discipline, and furnished with better arms; and when they were judged to be in a condition for marching, they were ordered to take the field a second time.

The Mahometans plunder a caravan.

This expedition was as prosperous as Mahomet could wish. His troops fell in with a caravan of Coraischites, whom they attacked with great fury, intirely defeated their guard, and carried off a very valuable booty, as well in effects as prisoners. The plunder was equally divided amongst the conquerors; for the prisoners, they were either obliged to embrace the doctrine of Mahomet, or, in case of refusal, were massacred upon the spot. This victory cost the Mahometans no more than fourteen soldiers. The prophet, for the encouragement of his disciples, with his own mouth gave the highest praises to those who lost their lives on that occasion, and they were with great solemnity declared martyrs to the faith. These men were surely an uncommon kind of martyrs, who began their mission with theft and robbery, and introduced and maintained their doctrine by the sword: but how much unlike the primitive Christians, whose only weapons were the word, example, and instruction!

The advantage which Mahomet's disciples had gained, considerably increased his party. The hopes of booty drew to him

him a great body of thieves and robbers, which rendered him so formidable, that the caravans could no longer travel the country with safety; the magistrates of Mecca likewise declined sending out any more troops against him.

The prophet then found himself in a condition to taste the fruits of his victory. But as he well knew the quiet he enjoyed was solely owing to the impotence of his enemies, he resolved to take advantage of their weakness, to bring them under his obedience.

So soon as he saw his forces were sufficient, he put himself at the head of his troops and marched towards Mecca, to which he laid siege. This expedition was successful; the place was carried by storm, and the affrighted inhabitants were soon forced to obey such laws as the conqueror thought fit to prescribe.

Mahomet
seizes Mecca,
and establish-
es his religion
there.

Mahomet then ordered the public exercise of his religion. He chose from amongst his disciples men of the greatest abilities, knowledge, and fidelity; he commanded them to publish the precepts and ceremonial of his law, of which he charged them to enforce a due observance.

The conquest of Mecca might have been sufficient, as well to satisfy Mahomet's vanity, as his revenge for the affront that had been offered in obliging him to fly his country. But his ambition soared a

He gains a
victory over
the Arabians
near Bedra.

higher pitch. Being possessed of two considerable places, where both his laws and his doctrine prevailed, he would have considered his project as no more than barely entered on, if the rest of Arabia had not bent to his yoke. He therefore over-run their whole country with an armed force, and coming up with a detachment of their troops near Bedra, he gave them battle, and gained a compleat victory.

This new success rendered him more enterprizing: he turned his arms upon the arabian Jews, and resolved to exterminate them: but he was stopped in the midst of his conquests, by the great loss he sustained in the battle of Ohod.

Mahomet
loses the bat-
tle of Ohod.

Abu-Sofian, his inveterate enemy, having put himself at the head of the Coraischites, caused his troops to advance towards Medina, and took possession of the mount of Ohod, which is at the distance of about four miles from that city. Mahomet, presuming upon his former success, immediately advanced with great boldness to drive him from that post. In the beginning of the action, he gained some little advantage, but having been unfortunately wounded, he was obliged to quit the field. His men, not seeing him at their head, were dismayed and easily broken by the enemy, who made a terrible slaughter of them. However, a great number escaped the sword of the conqueror, and reached Medina without

without being pursued. The Coraischites were so far from improving their victory, that they did not even pursue the fugitives, but employed themselves in taking a revenge, equally brutal and useless, on the bodies of the Mahometans slain in that battle.

On that day, the very women were remarkable for deeds that redounded shame on their sex. Hendah, Abu-Sofian's wife, and the women her attendants*, set the first examples of the most senseless fury. It is asserted that Hendah, amongst others, having found on the field of battle the body of Hamza, Mahomet's uncle, ripped him up with her own hands, and with her teeth tore out his liver.

Cruelty of
the arabian
women.

This bloody check was a terrible stroke to the prophet; but he felt it even more severely when he found himself exposed to the reproaches of such as had lost their relations and friends in the battle. Those murmurs, which are ever dangerous, but especially to a new-raised authority, caused him more disquietude than even the consequences of his defeat; but his imagination, fertile in expedients, soon suggested to him the means of silencing the complaints of that enraged multitude.

* The Arabian women accompanied their husbands to the war. They beat the drum at the head of their tribe.

Mahomet's
doctrine on
predestina-
tion.

He laid before them those principles he had so often inculcated, in respect to inevitable destiny, which made one of the chief articles of his doctrine; and from thence inferred, that such as fell in the field of battle, had ended their course in the very manner which the eternal decrees had fixed before all time. "The number of our days is appointed", said he; "we perish by sickness, by the sword, and by other unhappy accidents which human kind are subject to, and which menace us every moment: no man can prolong his life beyond the fixed term. The will of heaven has been accomplished as to the time; and what matters it as to the manner, place, or circumstances?"

This kind of language which Mahomet made use of, added to his outward shew and conduct, which were even more influencing than his words, had the desired effect. For now, instead of lamenting those who were killed in that action, they considered them as true martyrs to the faith, and seemed better disposed than ever to make a sacrifice of all for the support of their prophet's doctrine.

Mahomet de-
stroys several
tribes, who
had made a
league against
him.

Of this they gave the most remarkable proofs on different occasions, when Mahomet was attacked by several tribes, who had entered into an alliance against him. They were totally defeated in several actions; and to prevent any insurrections which they might have afterwards made, he almost

most entirely cut them off, that is to say massacred all the men, and carried all the women and children into slavery.

Whilst Mahomet was employed in subduing his countrymen, his generals in his name made conquests in more distant countries: thus he made himself master of Madian, and many other cities of note on the borders of Syria. His troops take Madian.

The rapidity of his conquests filled all Arabia with terror. The several tribes came to pay him homage, except the Co-raischites, who were very unwilling to submit. They resolved however to lay down their arms, but it was only to demand a truce: Mahomet consented to it; and a truce was concluded for ten years. It will doubtless appear amazing, that being at the head of such numerous forces, and in a course of victory, he did not make one attempt to subdue the only faction that refused obedience to his laws; but it is highly probable, he chose rather to refer the whole to time and opportunity. Besides, as he was originally of that tribe, it is likely he was unwilling to carry matters to extremity, and hoped he might by moderation more effectually gain his ends, than by employing open force. Mahomet makes a truce with the Co-raischites.

This truce was also favourable to the project he had formed of appointing pilgrimages to the famous temple called the Caabah. He therefore caused proclamation

to be made in the several places under his authority, that such as had embraced his doctrine, might go to Mecca and perform their devotions. He also fixed the time for undertaking the journey, and prescribed the ceremonies to be observed on the occasion: and that he might avoid giving umbrage to the Coraischites, with whom he had just entered into a treaty, he commanded, that such as performed that pilgrimage, should go unarmed, and remain at Mecca only three days.

So soon as it was noised abroad that Mahomet had adjusted matters with his most inveterate enemies, a croud of disciples flocked to him, who had fled for refuge into Ethiopia, during the persecution that had been raised against the prophet.

This re-union happened in the seventh year of the Hegyra, which (as I have already observed) was seven years after Mahomet had made his escape from Mecca to go to Medina.

The prophet having no more wars to wage with the Arabians his countrymen, again took up arms against the Jews, and attacked them with great fury: he seized several of their towns, and amongst others Kaibar, which was one of the strongest. In that place he had like to have met with his death amidst one of his most famous conquests. Having taken up his lodgings at the house of

Mahomet
subdueth the
Jews.

of one of the chief men in the city, named Hareth, they served up at his table, amongst other dishes, a poisoned shoulder of mutton. The prophet eat of it, and was soon taken very ill. However, they prevented it from being immediately fatal to him, tho' they could never intirely free him from the ill effects of the poison, by which he was greatly incommoded during the remaining three years of his life.

He is poisoned.

After his death it was discovered who gave him the poison. Zainab, daughter of the man with whom Mahomet had lodged, confessed, that she poisoned the shoulder of mutton, with this view, that if he was a true prophet the poison would take no effect; but if not, that it would infallibly kill him, and she should thereby free her country from a destructive tyrant.

The indisposition which Mahomet felt, notwithstanding the many remedies which were administered to him, did not prevent him from taking up arms a-new, and continuing his bloody mission with success. He marched against the Greeks, and lighted up the first spark of that fatal war, which his followers so hotly carried on during the space of seven or eight centuries.

Beginning of the war between the Mahometans and Greeks.

Authors differ in opinion as to the rise of this war. Some assert, that Mahomet undertook it only to be revenged of the emperor Heraclius, for the treacherous deal-

ings of one of his governors, who had caused a mahometan embassador to be assassinated.

Others say that in the wars which Heraclius waged with the Persians, he had many Arabians in his service, and those troops having been probably too importunate with the paymaster of the army for their money, that officer made answer he had none; and if he had, it was for the Christians, and not for such arabian dogs. This answer was no sooner related to Mahomet, than he resolved to take a severe revenge, and to march his troops into the very heart of the grecian empire.

But whatsoever was the cause, it is very certain the war was begun with all the fury that vengeance and bigotry could inspire. Mahomet was not personally engaged in that expedition, he having given the command of his troops to a general of approved valour and intrepidity.

Khaled is appointed general of the mahometan army.

He was called Khaled-ebn-Walid*, and was of the tribe of the Coraischites, for whom he had a long time borne arms against Mahomet. He even commanded one wing of their army, at the famous battle of Ohod, in which the prophet's troops were put to the rout. In a short time he quitted his tribe, and declared himself a disciple

* Ebn signifies son; so that Khaled-ebn-Walid, means Khaled the son of Walid.

of Mahomet, of whose doctrine he became afterwards a most zealous defender. He was so formidable for bravery and skill in the art of war, that Mahomet gave him the surname of Saifallah, that is to say, "sword of God *."

Such was the general the prophet sent against the Grecians. He began his march at the head of three thousand men only, and had the boldness to give battle to an army of twenty thousand combatants. The action happened near Mouta in Syria; and the two parties engaged with equal fury; but the first shock was almost fatal to the Mahometans, through the inequality of the numbers. Almost all their generals being killed on the spot, the troops lost their courage, and were on the point of giving ground, when Khaled, grasping the standard of their religion, boldly put himself at their head, and, animating them both by his words and example, invited them to open a way through the battalions of the Greeks, and to force the victory out of their hands, or receive a crown of martyrdom.

He defeats
the grecian
army.

This alternative, equally pleasing to bigots, raised the courage of the Mahometans. The brave Khaled immediately falling on the enemy, all his troops at the

* Sale, in his preliminary discourse to the translation of the Koran, page 54, says, Mahomet gave him the title of Seif min Soyuf Allah, one of the swords of God.

same time made so furious an attack on the Grecians, that they broke them, put them to the rout, and made a terrible slaughter of all such as fell into their hands.

The victorious Khaled returned to Medina. Mahomet possessed his share of the glory gained by this noble expedition, and was desirous of enjoying it in view of the secret enemies he had still at Mecca. He accordingly went to that city attended by an almost innumerable multitude of Mussulmen, who joined with him in his first pilgrimage to the Caabah.

There he performed the ceremonies he had appointed on that solemn occasion, and which have been ever since punctually observed in all the pilgrimages of the Mahometans. He entered the temple and kissed the black stone*; after that act of devotion, he went out, and seven times encompassed the Caabah. This ceremony, which is odd enough in itself, is rendered still more extraordinary by the means in which it has been always performed. In the procession round the temple they use a short quick pace, the three first times; the four remaining, are done with a grave, ordinary step.

* That stone is fixed in one of the corners of the Caabah: they call it in Arabic, Hagi-ar-al-asouad. It is probably an idol of the antient Arabians, the worship whereof Mahomet thought fit to preserve, as he did some other ceremonies, which had been used before his time in the temple of Mecca.

Mahomet having exactly complied with whatsoever the ceremonial prescribed on that occasion, and shortly afterwards set out for Medina with all his attendants.

The great pomp and magnificence which Mahomet displayed in his journey to Mecca, and the superstitious shew of religion with which he visited the Caabah, made a great impression upon the inhabitants of that city, and especially the Coraischites; a great number of whom followed him to Medina, in order to embrace his religion, and fight under his command. But what gave him the highest pleasure on that occasion was, to find amongst the number of his followers the flower of that tribe which had been his strongest opponents. Besides the brave Khaled, who had for some time been engaged in his service, there also joined him, Amru-ebn-al-As, a renowned captain, and Othman-ebn-Tellah, a famous person, who was then keeper of the Caabah; of both which I shall have occasion to make mention in the history of the first Caliphs.

The chief of the Coraischites embrace Mahometism.

The example of those three famous men did not engage the other tribes to submit, or even to remain quiet. They formed a party, and having prevailed on a considerable number of their countrymen to espouse their design, they marched out of Mecca, and offered Mahomet battle. This enterprize, far from being attended with the success

Several tribes revolt, and are beaten.

success they expected from it, was, on the contrary, the fatal period of their liberty.

The prophet, at the head of ten thousand men, marched out to meet them. The first onset was violent; but at last the troops of Mecca gave way, and were routed. Mahomet, enraged at their revolt, as well as at their boldness in breaking the truce they had sworn to, pursued the fugitives even to Mecca, and seized the city.

He did not now shew the same favour to the inhabitants of that place, as he had done when he was formerly master of it. He caused all such as were his open enemies to be put to death; and in regard to such as he found up in arms only, as they were drawn away by the torrent, he gave them their choice either of his religion or death. Such as readily embraced his doctrine saved their lives; but such as refused, or hesitated, were massacred upon the spot.

Mahomet causes himself to be acknowledged as sovereign in Mecca.

Immediately after these cruel executions, he appeared in a triumphant manner in Mecca, and obliged them to acknowledge him as sovereign lord, both in temporals and spirituals. And there was not in that city a person who dared to dispute what the conqueror had done.

Mahomet totally subdues the Arabians.

But in the beginning of the next year, which was the eighth of the Hegyra, some remains of the rebels who had escaped from the prophet's sword, privately formed a considerable party; and so soon as they thought

thought themselves strong enough, they took the field, and ravaged those parts which had submitted to his obedience. Mahomet, enraged at the rash proceedings of those factious men, set out at the head of his troops, and marched in quest of them. The two armies being in sight of each other at a place called Honaïm, a bloody battle was fought, in which the Mahometans, though infinitely superior in number, were almost put to the rout. Mahomet, amazed at this check, performed prodigies of valour, to stop the impetuous fury of the enemy. Whilst a part of his best troops stood the brunt of the attack, he flew to those who had given ground; and, animating them both by his courage and example, he rallied them, brought them again to face the enemy, and at last obtained a compleat victory.

This battle put an end to the arabian liberties. Mahomet caused himself to be acknowledged as sovereign over that extensive country; and having destroyed in all places the idols, and other monuments of Paganism, he ordained the exercise of his new religion, which was the only one that was suffered to be practised over all Arabia.

Mahomet, in order to shew his grateful sense of that victory which compleatly fixed his sovereign authority, made a second pilgrimage to Mecca, which was attended with

Mahomet's
second pilgrim-
mage.

with greater solemnity than the first: he visited the Caabah, and performed all the ceremonies with great devotion.

Mahomet's
generosity to
the poet
Caab.

Whilst he was in the temple, a poet, named Caab, desired to be introduced to him, that he might repeat some verses he had wrote in his praise. Though the prophet had great reason to be angry with the poet, he having formerly lashed him very severely in one of his satires; yet he now thought it beneath his dignity to bear such an injury in mind, especially as satisfaction was ready to be made: he therefore ordered Caab to approach, and gave him audience.

The poet, in the first place, asked pardon for his imprudence in writing against him: and the mildness and serenity which appeared on the prophet's countenance, being a presage of his forgiveness, Caab immediately repeated a copy of verses, so energetic, and so moving, that Mahomet, at the same time he granted him his pardon, made him a present which hath immortalized the memory of that poet amongst the Arabians. Mahomet took from his own back the mantle* he then wore, and with his

* Caab kept this mantle very charily till his death. In his life time, the Caliph Moawias offered him ten thousand drachmas for it; which he refused. After his death, the same Moawias sent his corpse to his heirs, with twenty thousand drachmas, (Abulfeda says, forty thousand) and received the mantle from them. After that time the Caliphs, successors

his own hands put it on the shoulders of his panegyrist.

He then left the temple, and having gone round it seven times, he performed the other duties of religion; he also did acts of sovereignty in Mecca; he erected courts for the distributing of justice, and appointed officers to perform the duties of the several posts and employments. He at the same time created an Iman, that is to say, a pontiff or high priest, to whom he committed the care of instructing the people. He made all these regulations like a sovereign in quiet possession of his dominions; he no longer seemed to be the dreadful conqueror, with his sword up-lifted to compel to obedience the people that groaned under his yoke; every thing now wore the face of peace and tranquillity. The Arabians, who had so bravely fought for their

successors of the prophet of God, used to put it on when they went in procession, and on account of solemn feasts, whether they were seated, or on horseback. Almost as em-billah, the 36th Caliph, and last of the house of the Abassides, was clothed with that mantle, when he went out of Bagdat to meet the conqueror Holagu, emperor of the Tartars. He also bore in his hand the prophet's leading staff; but Holagu took from him both the mantle and staff, burned them, and threw the ashes into the Tygris; saying, "I did not burn them out of contempt, but rather through respect, in order to preserve their purity and holiness from being profaned by impious men." Gagnier's life of Mahomet, vol. III. page 135. This mantle must have been a little threadbare, for at the time it was burned by the Tartar, it had been in use above six hundred years. This fact, according to Gagnier, happened in the 656th year of the Hegyra.

religion and liberties, peaceably complied with Mahomet's doctrine: they soon forgot their antient worship, and, in the end, found they enjoyed as much freedom under one sovereign, as under the chiefs of their tribes, whose numbers often served only to occasion disputes, which were always fatal to the common people.

Mahomet receives homage from several arabian princes.

The frontier provinces of Arabia followed the example set by the capital of that country: The princes of Yemamah came and submitted to Mahomet, and embraced his laws and religion. They were soon followed by Mossellamah, prince of Hagera, who came also and swore fealty to the prophet. As to the chiefs of the other provinces who could not attend in person, they made their submission by deputies.

Mahomet then enjoyed the fruits of his valour and enthusiasm with more tranquillity than ever. Having an absolute command over the minds and affections of his people, not an insurrection or revolt was heard of amongst the Arabians. He made a wise use of that happy juncture, to raise a considerable body of forces, which he exercised himself, and which he accustomed to discipline and obedience; qualities which are perhaps more necessary to a soldier, than bravery and intrepidity.

These precautions were not useless. The Greeks, who could not brook the disgrace they had suffered at the battle of Mouta, resolved

resolved to have their revenge, reckoning upon it that they had now taken all proper measures to defeat troops whom they still looked on to be undisciplined, and fitter to make a sudden and furious irruption, than to behave in a soldier-like manner in a pitched battle.

Full of this persuasion they boldly advanced to Balka, a city of note on the frontiers of Syria. On the first news of their march, Mahomet issued his orders, and every thing was soon ready to go and meet them. As he was of opinion the campaign might be long, he resolved to delegate his power to some person of integrity, capable of maintaining the good order he had successfully established in all parts of his dominions. Ali his cousin seemed to him the fittest man for so considerable a post, and he named him regent of the state during his absence. He then departed at the head of thirty thousand men, and advanced to Tabouc, where he waited for the enemy almost a month.

Mahomet
marches
against the
Greeks.

But it was in vain; for the Grecians having probably received intelligence of the number of troops that were marching against them, with Mahomet at their head, returned back again, and did not even dare to enter the arabian territories.

The Greeks
retire.

Mahomet, therefore, returned to Medina; at his arrival he found ambassadors from several of the neighbouring princes, who came in their masters names to congratulate him, and to demand his friendship. After their

departure, Mahomet employed the remainder of that year, which was the tenth of the Hegyra, in revising the several laws he had made for the government of the state, both in respect to civil and military affairs.

New pilgrimage of Mahomet to Mecca.

He thought it was his duty to perform the same at Mecca, which induced him to undertake a new pilgrimage to that city. As this was the last time he visited the Caabah, so the train that accompanied him in this journey, exceeded all the former in pomp and magnificence. A great multitude, preceded by the most considerable persons in Arabia, attended the prophet. His wives were also with him in this pilgrimage: they performed the journey in stately litters, borne by camels, and were followed by a great number of women appointed for their service. In such state did Mahomet make his entry into Mecca, in this his last journey. In order to inspire the people with a greater veneration for his doctrine, and at the same time to shew he was the supreme head as well in spirituals as temporals, he himself performed the office of pontiff: he preached in the temple, and concluded his harangue with new regulations, which he published, touching the rites and ceremonies of his new religion.

He performs the office of pontiff.

Sacrifice of camels.

But the most remarkable thing that passed in point of religion was, that Mahomet caused several camels to be offered up. It should seem he had a design to preserve the use of sacrifices,

sacrifices, prescribed by the mosaical law; however it doth not appear that his most zealous followers ever imitated him in that respect, but if they did the custom was not long in force; for we do not find it mentioned in any of their histories*.

This festival was concluded by the farewell which the prophet took of the people. He found his health was daily declining; the poison he had swallowed some years before, now operated with greater violence than ever, He then foresaw his latter end was not far off, and that he was about to depart from Mecca, never to return again; he therefore took leave of the people in the last discourse he pronounced to them, for which cause this journey was called the "farewell pilgrimage."

When Mahomet returned to Medina, he met with some cause of discontent. He was informed that two arabian princes had set up for prophets, and raised great disturbances in several provinces of Arabia: But these emotions were of no long duration; and the different factions dissipated of themselves, almost as soon as they arose.

The prophet did not long enjoy the satisfaction of seeing tranquillity restored to

Two arabian
princes set up
for prophets.

Mahomet's
death.

* The author seems to be under a mistake in making this assertion; vide Sale's introduction to his translation of the Koran, sect 4. fol 119. (and the authors he cites at the bottom of that page) where it is said, the mahometan pilgrims shave their heads, and slay victims in the valley of Mina.

his dominions ; he was taken dangerously ill at the house of one of his wives, named Zainab ; for it was his custom to change his abode every day, and to cohabit with each of his wives in turn.

Amongst these Aiesha was the prophet's favourite. So soon as he found himself past all hopes of recovery, he was by his own order carried to her house, that he might there end his days. And there he died, being then sixty-three years of age.

His death is
called in
question,

To so high a pitch was the madness of some of his followers carried, that they asserted the prophet was not dead, nay even that he could not die. Omar one of his most zealous disciples, was more violent in that opinion than any other, and threatened to cleave down with his scymitar, the first who should dare to say that Mahomet was dead.

On this account very warm disputes arose, which might have been attended with bad consequences, if the sage Abubecre had not interposed in order to silence them. He came therefore into the assembly, and desired he might be permitted to speak ; the regard and esteem he had acquired amongst the people, silenced the most turbulent, and likewise Omar himself. Abubecre then made a most nervous and pathetic speech, in which, after having lamented the loss the true believers had sustained, he shewed by convincing arguments, as well as by proofs drawn

drawn from the Alcoran, that Mahomet was mortal like other men, and was really dead.

This dispute being thus ended, another arose as to the place for the prophet's burial. Disputes on the place of his burial. The Mohagerians* required he should be buried at Mecca, because it was the place of his birth; the Ansarians†, at Medina, as it was the place of his residence; others maintained it ought to be at Jerusalem, which was the true city of the prophets.

Abubecre also put an end to this contest, by relating an expression which, he said, he heard from Mahomet's own mouth; namely, that every prophet ought to be buried in the very place where he died. The whole assembly submitted to Abubecre's decision; a grave was forthwith digged under the bed in which the prophet breathed his last, and there his body was buried.

His sepulchre therefore is not at Mecca, according to the vulgar opinion of some Christians, who pretend that Mahomet's body was put into an iron coffin, and that it is suspended in the air, by means of some large load-stones fixed in the roof of the mosque. This is an idle tale, and can gain no credit but amongst the ignorant.

* The name of Mohagerians was given to those that accompanied Mahomet in his flight from Mecca. The word signifies fugitives or companions in flight.

† The inhabitants of Medina, who received the prophet into their houses and gave him assistance, were called Ansarians; ansar signifying succour.

What hath been already said may suffice to give the reader a pretty good idea, of the conqueror and prophet, the founder of that new monarchy whose history is the subject of this work. However, before I begin upon it, it may not be improper to give some account even of Mahomet's person and doctrine.

Description of
Mahomet's
person.

Mahomet was of a middle size, and well proportioned. His complexion was olive, but his countenance was covered with a glow and freshness, which shewed a strong constitution, that might have lasted to extreme old age, had not poison shortened his days. And indeed, no man was ever better formed than he, to bear up against the calls of nature, or to undergo hardships and fatigues.

He had a most comprehensive genius, capable of the loftiest designs, and a firmness of mind which no obstacle could shake or terrify: being steadfast in pursuit of the most amazing projects, he was possessed of the means for procuring success: his piercing wit, great sagacity, and excellent judgment directed him to chuse the most proper measures; and he was almost ever certain of carrying his point by his skill in suiting himself to times and circumstances, particularly to the temper of his nation.

Mahomet, according to the common opinion, could neither write nor read: some passages in the Alcoran prove it; besides he himself owns it, saying he was Ommi,
which

which signifies a downright ignorant illiterate man.

And yet he was the most eloquent speaker in his nation. It seemed as if he had made his mother-tongue his particular study, for he was perfectly acquainted with the whole energy, power, copiousness, and purity of it. As he was naturally eloquent, his style was nervous and pathetical, and the turn of his expressions elegant and lively. That easy flow of words was the effect of a clear head and fertile imagination, which on all occasions suggested to him such ideas, as were most likely to attain his end.

There cannot be produced a more evident ^{Of the Alcoran.} proof of my assertion, than that famous book known all over the world by the name of the Alcoran*, that is to say, the book, by way of eminence, as is the bible amongst the Christians. It will appear from this book (the Alcoran) though it be a motley mixture of contradictions, fables, and exalted truths, that Mahomet never lost sight of his original plan. He well knew that in any other climate, this strange collection would have met with no success; but on the contrary he should have been treated as an impostor by men of sedateness, and capable of reflection; but he was sure of the persons

* The word koran is derived from the verb karaa, to read, and signifies properly the reading, or rather that which ought to be read; by which name the Mahometans denote not only the whole volume, but any chapter, or section of it. Sale's Prelim. Discourse to the Koran, fol. 56.

amongst whom he was preaching his doctrine ; he had set their imaginations to work, and had gained an absolute ascendancy over them, insomuch that whatever he did was right ; those bigots revered even his lewdness and debauchery. However some transactions passed of so extraordinary a nature as to give great cause of offence ; but the prophet soon salved the matter, by tacking another chapter to the Alcoran : upon this all their outcries ceased, and his crimes were changed into virtues. This I shall make appear from two examples I am about to quote.

Mahomet's inclination for women, and how he justifies it.

Zeid, one of Mahomet's chief officers, had married a very beautiful woman named Zeïnab. The prophet was deeply enamoured of her, and matters were so ordered, that Zeid divorced her, and Mahomet immediately took her to wife.

A marriage entered into with a woman whose husband was still alive, gave so much the more offence, as Zeid was likewise the prophet's adoptive son ; * insomuch that they openly condemned him for marrying his son's wife. All these complaints were silenced by means of a revelation which is set forth in these terms in the 33d. chapter of the Alcoran, verse 36th. " But when Zeid had determined the matter concerning her, and had resolved to divorce her, we joined her in marriage unto thee ——— No crime is

* Vide, the story at large in Sale's notes on that chapter of the Koran, fol. 347.

to be charged on the prophet, as to what God hath allowed him, &c.”

And at the same time to obviate all complaints and objections that might still be made on account of the adoption, the same revelation deprived Zeid of the privilege of being Mahomet's son, and adds, “Mahomet is not the father of any one amongst you; but the apostle of God, and the seal of the prophets.”

In about a year's time another event happened which required the interposition of a new revelation. Makawkas, prince of Assyria and of Egypt, sent to Mahomet some valuable presents, amongst which were two beautiful young maidens, one of whom, named Mary, raised so violent a flame in his breast, that he resolved to take her for a mistress. During some time he strove to conquer his passion, because fornication is expressly prohibited by the Alcoran: it is therein said, “draw not near unto fornication, for it is wickedness and an evil way, *to which God hath annexed grievous punishments.*” * Alcoran. c. 17. v. 38.

However, being weary of struggling, he contrived a revelation, which allowed of his gratifying himself, and he made use of the permission; though with the greatest secrecy for fear of giving offence. Unhappily for him he was found out by one of his wives, who made so great a noise about it, that in order to appease her, he swore he would

* The words distinguished by Italicks, are not in Sale's translation.

have no more to do with Mary. As it would have been a very difficult matter for him to have kept this oath, he was soon released from it by the angel Gabriel, who came and reproached him in these terms. “ Oh prophet, why holdest thou that to be prohibited which God hath allowed thee, seeking only to please thy wives ; since God is inclined to forgive and merciful ? God hath allowed you the dissolution of your oaths, &c.”

Alcoran.
c. 66. v. 1.

Thus Mahomet had a dispensation for not keeping that article in the Alcoran, which prohibits fornication ; and the Mahometan doctors have always considered that licence as a personal prerogative, and a particular privilege which God then granted to him exclusive of all others.

It is plain from the examples I have related, what credit ought to be given to a book composed in so extraordinary a manner as was the Alcoran. In short, it has neither principles, connection, nor regular system ; and as to the precepts it contains they were made (if I may be allowed the expression) only from hand to mouth, as time and circumstances required.

But amidst a heap of puerile tales, fabulous miracles, and enthusiastic visions, with which that book abounds, there may be found at the same time many sublime truths, expressed with amazing force and energy.

energy. Whatever relates to the divinity and his attributes, is treated of with equal accuracy and sublimity: as is also the love of God and our neighbour; and several moral virtues which are defined and explained with great judgment and propriety.

Mahomet employed more than twenty years in making this uncommon collection, which is in truth no better upon the whole than a dark, unconnected, irregular performance. The greatest part of the propositions which relate to doctrine, are heresies copied from Arius, Nestorius, Sabellicus, and other heretics. It was, as I have observed, the fruit of the conferences Mahomet had entered into with the doctors of the several sects, which at that time swarmed in the East.

His first co-operator in that undertaking was a Jew, and he was also assisted therein by a christian monk, whom the Easterns call Bahira, and the Westerns, Sergius. He likewise received helps from some other doctors whom he admitted to a share in his project; and doubtless to them Mahomet was indebted for the chief passages of divinity and morality, which are contained in the Alcoran.

But the two fundamental points, which are the basis of that book, as well as of the whole Mahometan doctrine, consist in teaching, in the first place, that whatsoever happens

Fundamental
points of Ma-
hometism.

pens

pens is so pre-ordained by the divine will, that nothing can prevent its being effected: in the second place, that the mahometan religion ought to be established without miracles, and received without dispute or contradiction; consequently, that they ought to put to death all such as refuse to comply with it, and that they merit paradise by slaying the unbelievers; in like manner as they deserve a crown of martyrdom in dying by the sword of the enemies to Mahometism.

It was owing to these maxims, that the new legislator was so successful in the wars he carried on against the enemies to his faith; and the same doctrine was one of the chief causes of that amazing success which brought under the dominion of Mahomet's successors, a very great part of our hemisphere, which the Mahometans are possessed of to this very day.

But vain would have been all the prophet's attempts to form a party by help of his doctrine alone, how delusive soever we may suppose it, if he had not, above all, been master of that talent so rare, but at the same time so necessary to the head of a party, I mean the sublime art of managing the minds of men; and he must have possessed it in the highest degree, to gain so great a number of followers, whose unbridled love for women could not fail of giving much offence.

It is true that vice was in some measure counterbalanced by the great and amiable qualities the prophet was possessed of. He had not only a very good memory, a lively conception, and an excellent genius and capacity, but also a chearful and even temper. He was popular with the commonalty, familiar with the nobility, lent a gracious ear to all that accosted him, and was a religious observer of his promises. The poor found in him a tender father, who was moved at their wretchedness, and relieved their wants with a liberal hand. And if we may credit Abul-fedā, he joined to these qualities, an uncommon abstinence and sobriety.

Mahomet's
character.

All these virtues were terribly disguised by his irregular passion for the fair sex; and yet he had the art to prevent that vice from being of any prejudice to his doctrine: on the contrary he made a merit of it, and pretended it excited him to devotion. This will doubtless appear to be a very odd expedient, and therefore I mention the author I have taken it from; it is one of his historians, called Anas-ben-malek, who makes him speak in these terms: "There are two things in this world, which are very pleasing to me, said the prophet, women and perfumes, and both these things delight the eye, and stir me up to fervency in prayer."

Historians do not agree as to the number of Mahomet's wives. An arabian author counts up seventeen of them, besides concubines.

His wives.

bines. Gentius, a Christian author, makes them amount to one hundred and twenty. But it is very certain the prophet had many more than his own Alcoran allowed of, which suffered a Mussulman to have but four wives at a time. As to the prophet, he had priviledges grounded even on revelation, and the same Alcoran which made a certain thing criminal, and forbid it to the Arabians in general, gave full and free licence to the legislator.

The most famous and best beloved of his wives, were Cadhiga, Aïesha, and Hassa, the first of whom hath been spoken of in the beginning of this abridgement: she died at Mecca three years before the commencement of the Hegyra, being then in her sixty-fifth year.

Aïesha survived Mahomet a long time: she was but seven years old at the time of her marriage. As she was the only one of Mahomet's wives who was a virgin, when he espoused them, the father of that maiden, who was called Abdollah, by the prophets command took the name of Abubecre, that is to say, "father of the virgin." This man, as well as his daughter, will soon appear acting principal characters in this history. Aïesha died in the 58th year of the Hegyra, at which time she was sixty-seven years old.

Hassa was the daughter of Omar. The prophet espoused her in the third year of the Hegyra: to her the Alcoran was committed
for

for safe custody after Mahomet's death; she died in the 45th year of the Hegyra, aged sixty years.

Mahomet had eight children by Cadhiga; Mahomet's children. four sons, and four daughters: all which died before their father, except one daughter named Fatima, who survived him some months. She married Ali her cousin. Though the prophet had many other wives yet they bore him no children. For I do not reckon a son named Ibrahim, which he had by Mary one of his concubines, and who died also before his father.

It is amazing, as the prophet left no male children, that he did not think of publicly nominating a successor; for could he avoid foreseeing the fatal consequences which would flow from an interregnum, especially in an empire so newly established?

And in fact, so soon as he was dead several parties arose, each laying claim to an exclusive right of appointing a successor. Different parties are formed to appoint Mahomet a successor. The chief of them were the Ansarians and Mohagerians, who had so lately disputed about the place of Mahomet's burial. They were present at the assembly appointed for an election. And both sides maintained their pretensions with so much warmth and eagerness, that it was more than once feared, they would come to blows.

Considering how they then stood affected, it would have been difficult, and even dangerous to have inquired into the reasons on either

either side. In order therefore to satisfy the parties, it was thought proper to propose an equal partition of the state, and the naming of two sovereigns. If this proposal had been accepted, the mussulman empire would have been ruined: each of the two chiefs at the head of his faction would infallibly have waged war against the other in order to seize the whole authority, and re-unite under one sovereign, the extensive and valuable possessions of Mahomet. The Mohagerians immediately perceived the inconvenience, and rejected the expedient which had been proposed.

Abubecre, who had on all occasions shewn himself a friend to peace, was in hopes he had found means of putting an end to the difference, by naming to the assembly two persons, of whom he intreated they would chuse one; he proposed Omar, and Abou-Obeid. But this method did not answer the purpose; the Ansarians declared unanimously for the one; the other had all the votes of the Mohagerians, thus the election remained undecided, and the dispute grew hotter than ever.

Abubecre is
elected Ma-
homet's suc-
cessor.

The longer that affair was procrastinated, the more they had to fear from those enraged and turbulent men, who seemed ready to draw their scymitars against each other. Omar therefore, who was highly respected amongst them on account of his prudence and wisdom, took a step which ended the whole difficulty.

difficulty. He arose from his seat, and approaching Abubecre, he kissed his hand, loudly acknowledged him for sovereign, and took the oath of allegiance to him. This extraordinary measure amazed them all, and at the same time reconciled them to each other. They all followed Omar's example; and Abubecre received the homage of the whole assembly.

Thus Omar, to save the state, as well as his religion, from utter ruin, in this juncture generously sacrificed his private interest to the public good. And as the step he had taken might have proved a dangerous example, and been made a precedent for the future, he himself declared that if any person attempted afterwards to imitate his conduct, he should be stabbed on the spot, as well as the man who accepted of such a nomination.

But if Abubecre was indebted for his dignity to the presence of mind, and disinterested conduct of Omar, it may be presumed that the hopes which the latter entertained of one day possessing the sovereignty had some share in it. By nominating Abubecre, who was then greatly advanced in years, the utmost risque Omar could run, was the waiting a short time before he succeeded him; whereas all would have been at stake had the partition of the sovereignty between the several claimants taken place. For in such case the whole would have been annihilated.

A B U B E C R E.

The FIRST CALIPH.

ABUBECRE.

Hegyra 11.

Ch. ær. 632.

ABUBECRE, when he ascended the Arabian throne, refused to assume the title of king, prince, or other pompous denomination. The most pleasing title was that which would be ever recalling to their minds the memory of the prophet who was founder of their state; for which reason he took the stile of Caliph, in Arabic signifying vicar or successor; and that name hath been since used by all such as have reigned over the Arabians.

Discontent of
Ali's party.

The election of Abubecre was not so unanimous as to leave no mal-contents. They did not indeed openly oppose it in the assembly, because they were forced to yield to the majority of votes; but in a short time complaints arose, not directly against the Caliph, whose merit was universally acknowledged; but many amongst them alledged, that the Caliphship of right belonged to Ali, who was Mahomet's cousin, and son-in-law, and they asserted that only such as were of the prophet's family, could be lawful successors to the sovereignty.

The persons who made these complaints, were in some measure authorized to do it, by the manner in which Ali took Abubecre's election. He was not present at the assembly

sembly in which that important affair was transacted; and when he was informed of what had passed there, he could not help shewing his discontent.

ABUBECRE.

Hegyra 11.

Ch. ær. 632.

Abubecre being made acquainted with Ali's sentiments, determined to use his utmost endeavours to appease him; fearing the murmurs of so considerable a person might make dangerous impressions on the minds of his subjects. He therefore directed Omar to attend him, and to use all possible means for reconciling him to the present disposition of affairs.

Omar went forthwith to the house of Fatima, where he knew Ali then was, with a numerous company of his relations and friends. He told them the purport of his commission, and used his utmost endeavours to prevail with Ali to concur in an election which had been made in due form, and by the concurrent suffrages of the nation. Ali, unmoved by remonstrances which tended only to make him renounce a dignity which he thought he had a right to, returned no other answer, but by making fresh complaints; which plainly shewed that pacific measures would have no effect upon him. Omar therefore making use of that bold language which had often stood him in so great stead, told Ali he must obey; and turning at the same time to the company who were with him, threatened that he would immediately set fire to the house, if

Omar obliges

Ali to ac-

knowledge

Abubecre.

ABUBECRE. they any longer delayed acknowledging the
 Hegyra 11. Caliph.
 Ch. ær. 632.

Ali, who knew Omar to be a man of his word, did not chuse to expose himself to such an insult; he thought it best, therefore, to comply in the present exigency, and forthwith went and paid homage to Abubecre.

Conference
 between Abu-
 becre and Ali.

He had afterwards a long conference with the Caliph, in which he could not help telling him how greatly he was surpris'd at his accepting the sovereign authority, without so much as offering to give him previous information of it. Abubecre, who was sensible that Ali's complaints were not groundless, endeavoured to pacify him, and treated him with the greatest mildness and moderation. He gave him an account of the terrible extremity to which the different factions had pushed matters at the assembly for the election, in the most moving terms. He told him, that he saw them prepared to cut each others throat; that the tumult ceased the moment he was elected; and that he thought the present circumstances obliged him to comply with the resolutions of the people; fearing a refusal, or even the least hesitation, might have rekindled the flame, and occasioned troubles, which would have infallibly overturned their yet unsettled state.

Ali appearing to be convinced by these reasons, the Caliph added, that as he accepted the dignity only for the good of his country, he would readily lay it down whenever any one could be found, who had a due regard
 to

to the people, and should be capable of preserving tranquillity amongst them. Now whether Abubecre was sincere in making this disinterested offer, or whether he only proposed thereby to gain Ali's good will, is not so certain as that it had its desired effect; for so far was Ali from continuing his complaint, that he highly commended the Caliph's generous sentiments, ratified the homage he had before paid him*, and begged he would not think of resigning a dignity which he had so good a right to possess, as well on account of his personal merit, as by the general consent of the people.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

No sooner was this affair so happily concluded, than another happened which caused the Caliph great uneasiness. A numerous party of Arabians, stirred up by artful and seditious men†, who, in imitation of Mahomet, were desirous of acquiring a name by the help of religion, resolved to shake off the

Several tribes
of the Arabi-
ans revolt.

* Some authors assure us that the Alians always denied Ali's having consented to Abubecre's election.

† Whatsoever veneration and respect Mahomet gained both to his person and doctrine, many sects did not wait till his death before they made their appearance. Several of them arose in his life time, and they amounted unto seventy-two in the first century of the Hegyra. It became much worse in after times, when Aristotle's logic and metaphysics were translated into Arabic. The orthodoxy of Mahometism then received a terrible blow, by the prodigious number of interpretations, opinions, and disputes, which insensibly raised the flame of civil wars. Each of those sects had its commentators, glossators and doctors; who studied, one would think, to go beyond each other in the extravagance of their opinions, and their obstinacy in maintaining them.

ABUBECRE. yoke of the prophet's successor, and to coin and
 Hegyra 11. establish a new religion to their own liking.
 Ch. ær. 632.

Their schism was first made known by their refusal to pay the usual tribute, as also the tenths, and such alms as the prophet had prescribed. In vain were they summoned to return to obedience, and acknowledge the Caliph's authority: they took up arms in order to support their measures, and it was soon found that they had begun their march and were approaching Medina.

Measures
 taken against
 the rebels.

This news threw the whole city into a consternation, and the terrified inhabitants thought they saw the enemy already at their gates. Abubecre immediately issued proper orders, and speedily raised a body of troops: and as there was reason to apprehend the enemy might attempt to surprize them, whilst they were busied in their preparations, the Caliph caused the women, children, and old men, in a word, all that were incapable of bearing arms, to be sent to a place of safety. These measures having been taken, and the troops being ready, Abubecre gave the command of his army to Khaled, a captain of renown, who had served with great reputation under Mahomet.

They are de-
 feated.

Khaled maintained on that occasion, the glory he had acquired in the prophet's life-time. He boldly marched up to the enemy, at the head of five thousand men only, and obtained a compleat victory. A great number of the rebels were killed, and
 taken

taken prisoners; of which number were the chief officers, and amongst the rest Malek-ebn-Noweirah, commander of the rebels.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

Malek was a man of great note amongst the Arabians, he was of high descent, was possessed of an uncommon bravery, and was likewise distinguished for his wonderful talent in poetry. The Caliph, who had a particular esteem for that general, would willingly have brought him to submission, by using mildness and moderation: and as he had reason to suppose he took up arms rather to become head of a party, than with a view to abandon the mahometan religion, he ordered Khaled to confer with him, and to sound him as to the sentiments he entertained touching the prophet's doctrine.

Malek, their chief, is taken prisoner.

Malek made no scruple of acknowledging his manner of thinking in regard to religion. He declared, he thought his own prayers, and those of his party, were as good and as acceptable to God, as the prayers of the Mussulmen who paid the zacal*. Khaled answered, that prayers ought to be accompanied by alms, and did not exempt men from paying the usual taxes and impositions. "And are these, said he, the language and pretensions of thy master?" To these words, which plainly shewed the prisoner did not own himself the Caliph's subject, Khaled furiously replied, "what, is not my master thine also?" and, without giving him time to return a word, he threatened that he would cause his head to be taken

Conference between Malek and Khaled.

* A tax enjoined by the mahometan law.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra II.
Ch. ær. 632.

off. Malek, not in the least disconcerted, coolly said: "And is this the order thy master hath given thee? Khaled, no longer able to to contain himself, only replied, "What still the same contempt for our sovereign!" and immediately commanded his attendants to seize him and put him to death.

Malek is
beheaded.

Some officers, who were with Khaled, strongly interceded with him to revoke the order he had given; but that general was inexorable. The unfortunate Malek, finding himself doomed to die, could not conceive, that being a Mussulman by religion, and disagreeing with the others only in a few legal ceremonies, they could possibly deal with him so cruelly. He therefore thought the beauty of his wife, who was then present, and probably had been taken prisoner at the same time, was the cause of his destruction. "That woman," cried he, at the very time Khaled's attendants were laying hands on him, "is the sole cause of my death." "No," replied Khaled, "it is not she that occasions you to die, but God alone, whose religion you have abandoned." "Not so," resumed Malek, "for I now profess it." But he could say no more, for that instant they struck off his head.

When Abubecre heard this news, he was very wroth; he had a value for Malek, and intended to have won him by treating him mildly, and to have made use of rigorous means only at the last extremity; but the hasty zeal of Khaled was incompatible with
such

such a conduct. However, he almost paid dear for the bold freedom with which he had exceeded the bounds of his commission, for the Caliph was bent on punishing him, and revenging, by his death, the loss of a noted leader, who had not merited so cruel a treatment: but, fortunately for Khaled, Omar was pleased to interpose in his behalf, and pleaded his cause so successfully, that at last he appeased the Caliph, and obtained the suppliant's pardon.

ABUBEKRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

The defeat of Malek and his whole party restored quiet to the city of Medina; tho' there still remained many enemies to be opposed; for after the death of Mahomet, several petty prophets arose, who strove to gain and head a party; but they were not formidable, tho' very numerous: for there was not the least alliance or connection between them, and it was well known they would not afford each other any assistance; in so much that it was hoped they should easily reduce them one by one.

Amongst these several parties, the most considerable faction was that which was headed by a famous captain, called Moseilama, a man of great conduct and activity, who had been one of Mahomet's first disciples, and who had soon after presumed, even in the prophet's life time, to improve upon his doctrine, and publish a new Alcoran; though whilst Mahomet held the reins of authority, he was unable to make any considerable progress.

Moseilama
sets up for a
prophet.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

gress. But so soon as he was dead, Moseilama, finding himself more at liberty, published his new tenets with great ceremony, and gained a large number of followers. And he at last obtained so high credit in the province of Yemamah*, that the Caliph resolved to bring him under his subjection by force of arms.

Abubecre immediately sent out against him Akramah and Sergiabil, officers of distinction, with a pretty numerous body of troops; these were afterwards considerably augmented by fresh detachments, which the Caliph caused to march under the command of Khaled. That army being then about forty thousand strong, went and encamped at a place called Akrebah.

The Mussulmen victorious by the death of Moseilama.

Moseilama, tho' greatly inferior in numbers, boldly marched up to the Mussulmen, and gave them battle. This rash step had almost been attended with the greatest success, for the Mussulmen were broke at the first onset, and the greatest part of them were ready to fly; but all was soon restored to order by the bravery and activity of the generals, who rallied the broken troops; and they taking fresh courage, fell furiously on the enemy, resolved to repair the shame of their defeat. This second engagement was extremely hot on both sides; and victory remained a long time in suspense; but Moseilama having been killed in the heat of the

* A province of Arabia, different from Yemen.

action,

action, his death occasioned the loss of the battle. The Mussulmen using their utmost efforts, made the Arabians give ground, and put them to the rout. They made a terrible slaughter amongst them, ten thousand having been left on the spot; besides these, a great number of the run-aways were massacred by the troops sent in pursuit of them; and such as escaped the sword of the conqueror, saved their lives only by again embracing Mahometism, which they had abandoned.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

No sooner was this affair terminated, than they found themselves obliged to take measures for quelling some disturbances which arose in the country of Barheim, a province of Arabia, upon the persian gulph. The inhabitants of that district were fallen back to their ancient religion, and denied payment of the dues prescribed by the law of Mahomet. Abubecre forthwith sent a body of troops to subdue the rebels, but the preparations alone frightened them into obedience. Being intimidated by the example of Moseilama, whose defeat had spread a terror over all Arabia, they again professed the mahometan religion; and for a long time the least project tending to a revolt was not so much as heard of.

The province
of Barheim
returns to its
duty.

The Caliph having thus put an end to the troubles, vanquished the rebels, and brought all Arabia under submission to his authority and religion, proposed to commence a war

Beginning of
the holy wars.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

war against the christian powers; in order to force them either to embrace Mahometism, or to become tributaries to the Mahometans. Abubecre probably foresaw, that the most effectual way to prevent such disturbances as turbulent men might raise in the provinces of his dominions, would be to find them employment abroad, by pointing out to them a common enemy, whose riches would excite their covetousness, at the same time that their zeal would be gratified in gaining proselites to Mahometism. But however that was, the Caliph's proposal was unanimously approved of in council, and they resolved to massacre (without giving the least quarter) all such Christians as should refuse to comply with one of those proposals, which were the chief cause for their taking up arms.

This war therefore, having been undertaken for the propagation of Mahomet's doctrine, the Mussulmen have called it "the holy war". They have also dignified with the same appellation every other enterprize they formed upon the like pretext.

In consequence of the resolution taken in council, Abubecre forthwith sent a circular letter to all the princes of Arabia, and to the governors of cities and places, commanding them to make a speedy levy of troops. The letter was expressed in these terms.

In

“ In the name of the most merciful God, ABUBECRE.
 Abdollah-ebn-abu-cohaffas*, to all true be- Hegyra 11.
 lievers, greeting and prosperity. May the Ch. ær. 632.
 mercy and protection of God be upon you. Abubecre's
 I praise the most wise God, and pray † for his letter.
 prophet Mahomet. This letter is to in-
 form you that I design to send the true
 believers into Syria, that they may force
 that country from the hands of the infidels:
 I would also have you to know, that in
 fighting for religion, you obey God.”

So soon as this letter was made public,
 the Mussulmen came in great crowds from
 all parts, and asked leave to fight under the
 holy standard. And the troops which had
 been so expeditiously raised in the several pro-
 vinces, joined in a body, and encamped
 under the walls of Medina. As they were
 eager for action, a short day was appointed
 for their march, which being arrived, Ye-
 zid-ebn-abi-sofian, whom the Caliph had
 appointed commander of the forces, drew
 them up in battle array at a small distance
 from the city.

Abubecre, highly pleased with the zeal of Abubecre
 his subjects, went out of Medina to review prays for the
 his troops. But in order to take in at once success of his
forces.

* These were Abubecre's proper names; an account has
 already been given of the motive which induced Mahomet
 to change them, in order to give him that name, by which
 he is known in history.

† This is a manifest contradiction to the prejudices of
 some Christians, who believe the Mahometans address their
 prayers to Mahomet.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch.ær. 632.

the noble fight of an army ranged in battalia; he, together with some of his favourites, ascended a hill, from the top of which he had a full prospect of them. Being moved at the grandeur of their appearance, he fell on his knees, and begged the Almighty that he would be pleased to inspire his foldiers with courage, and that he would not suffer men who so freely devoted their lives to the honour of his name, to become the prey of infidels.

This prayer being ended, the Caliph went down the hill, put himself at the head of his army, and commanded them to march. As he was on foot, the general officers alighted from their horses, in order to accompany him; but Abubecre bid them remount, telling them he had a particular reason for marching on foot; that his design was to offer up to God the first steps he should take at the head of so gallant a band, and he hoped they would be accepted by the divine goodness.

The Caliph continued thus his march for some time, and then took leave of his troops, wishing them a happy success. Afterwards, turning to Yezid, he charged him to use the troops mildly, and to undertake nothing of consequence without consulting the principal officers; that he should never swerve from the rules of justice and equity; that he should inspire the troops with the utmost courage and intrepidity; that he should

should behave with moderation in the advantages he might gain; that when he was a conqueror, he should never lose sight of the principles of humanity; and in an especial manner he recommended it to him, to prevent the massacre of old men, women, and children. But he did not give him such moderate council, in respect to the ministers and doctors of Christianity: however, he made a distinction betwixt the monks and the secular clergy. “Do no hurt, said he, to the monks*, who lead a retired life in their monasteries; but shew no mercy to those shaven priests, who belong to the synagogue of Satan; unless they become Mussulmen, or submit to pay tribute.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

After this discourse, Abubecre bid adieu to the generals and soldiers, and returned to Medina: and the Mussulman army continued its march towards Syria.

The Mahometans
march towards Syria.

This province was totally unguarded: the emperor Heraclius imagined he had nothing to fear from an empire so newly sprung up, and which he also supposed was rent by intestine divisions. Besides, the con-

* This regard which Abubecre paid to the monks was perhaps occasioned by the kind reception Mahomet had met with in several monasteries in Syria; and especially in that of Bosra, where he contracted an intimate acquaintance with a monk called Bahira by the Easterns, and Sergius by the Westerns. It is asserted; as I have already observed, that this monk was one of Mahomet's chief assistants in composing his Alcoran.

quests

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

quests he had lately gained over a people so formidable as the Persians, made him firmly believe that no other nation would have the boldness to attack him in his own dominions. This unhappy confidence occasioned him to neglect taking such measures as prudence required; insomuch that his frontiers were defenceless, and particularly about Syria, where he had not so much as one fortified place.

They beat
the troops
which the
grecian emperor
sent against
them.

That prince, therefore, was amazed when he heard the Arabians were on their march, and preparing to enter Syria: but the thoughts of his late success soon made him easy as to the event of an enterprize, which he concluded was ill concerted. He therefore thought it sufficient to send a body of troops to stop the march of the Arabians, and force them to return the way they came.

The general, to whom the emperor had given the command of his troops, boldly marched towards the enemy, and gave them battle so soon as he came up with them; but the issue was far from answering his expectations. The Greeks were broken and put to the rout; all the efforts of the general were unable to rally them, he was killed upon the spot, and his death caused the utter defeat of his army.

The news of this victory was immediately sent to the Caliph, together with the colours, standards, and other spoils of the Christians. Abubecre caused them forth-
with

with to be exposed to public view, and was lavish in praising those who had a share in that enterprize, which seemed a prelude to the greatest advantages. The Mussulmen, animated at the sight of these testimonies of the victory gained by their fellow subjects, as well as by the commendations bestowed on their bravery, envied the good fortune of those who were present at so glorious an action. The Caliph, highly pleased at the present disposition of the people, continued his discourse with still greater energy than before, that he might enflame their minds, and engage them in the design he had formed.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

After having duly extolled the merit both of the generals and soldiers, who had done so much honour to the nation, he asked if it would be advisable to push on the advantage they had gained; and whether the people would refuse to join their brave countrymen; and in concert with them to undertake the conquest of Syria?

The Caliph
sends fresh
troops to Syria.

In a moment the whole body of the people was in motion; each man was eager to have a share in so glorious an enterprize: so that in a very short time Abubecre had a strong militia on foot, who waited only for his orders to begin their march.

The Caliph, that he might not give their ardour time to cool, issued with all speed the necessary dispatches for the departure of his troops; and gave the command of them

Omar occasions the command to be taken from Saed.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

to one of his favourite captains, named Saed. The choice of that general was opposed by Omar, who earnestly solicited the nomination of another. But historians do not say what could induce him so warmly to disapprove of that choice; Abubecre was therefore at a great loss; he was unwilling to disoblige Saed, by revoking the commission he had just given him: on the other hand, he would have avoided giving Omar the least cause of displeasure. In this dilemma, he went to consult his daughter Aiesha, who was Mahomet's widow. This woman, having been the prophet's darling, the Mussulmen entertained the greatest veneration for her. They called her "mother of the faithful:" she was, as it were, the queen of Mahomet's other wives, and was supposed to be filled with his spirit; and consequently very capable of solving all difficulties; insomuch that they advised with her on matters of the greatest importance.

The opinion of Aiesha was not favourable to Abubecre's intentions: far from approving the choice he had made of Saed, she declared herself to be of the same sentiments with Omar, who, she said, had no other views but for the public good on that occasion.

Saed's disinterestedness.

The conduct of Saed, when he was informed of Aiesha's decision, was a fresh proof of the regard the Mussulmen paid to that woman. Far from murmuring, the general forthwith

forthwith resigned the standard, which the Caliph had presented to him, as a mark of the authority he had been pleased to intrust him with; and only said, he would march with as much zeal under the orders of another, as if he had been continued in the command himself.

ABUBECRE.

Hegyra 11.

Ch. ær. 632.

At the very time Saed was acting so disinterested a part, there was another captain, named Amru-ebn-al-As, who earnestly solicited for the command. He applied to Omar, and begged he would use his interest to obtain that post for him. But Omar (who indeed could easily have done it) was at the same time not of a temper to procure command for one who so eagerly sought after it: and accordingly he refused making any application to the Caliph for that purpose.

Amru is made general of the new forces.

But as Amrou was, next to Saed, the most able leader, Abubecre appointed him of his own accord; and Omar, who did not think fit to appear in his behalf, suffered the nomination to pass without opposing it.

The mussulman troops being ready to begin their march, Amru came to receive the Caliph's orders, who gave him the most prudent advice, as to his conduct in the employment he was about to undertake. He ordered him to take his rout through Palestine, and to send advice of his arrival to Yezid, that he might join his body of forces, in case of need; otherwise that he should wait for further orders. Abubecre at the

ABUBECRE. same time appointed a generalissimo for his
 Hegyra 11. army in Syria, which dignity he bestowed
 Ch. ær. 632. on Abu-obeidah; who departed with the
 The com- troops; but left them in Palestine, that he
 mand in chief might the sooner arrive in Syria.
 given to Abu-
 obeidah.

He found affairs greatly changed there; the Mussulmen no longer seemed to be the same victorious soldiers, whose valour had been so highly extolled at Medina. The Greeks had beat them in several actions, and were become so formidable, that the Arabians no longer dared to keep the field. Even Obeidah became infected with the common terror; who, far from endeavouring to recover from the Greeks the advantages which the Mussulmen had formerly gained over them, resolved to remain inactive, and to keep himself barely upon the defensive.

Khaled is appointed instead of Obeidah.

Abubecre having received this news, instantly recalled Obeidah, and appointed Khaled in his stead. That general was then in the province of Irak, where he had made a great progress: he had got possession of the capital, and was preparing to reduce the whole country, when he received the Caliph's orders.

He forthwith repaired to Syria, where his presence soon changed the face of affairs. His great reputation raised the courage of the troops, who thought they had nothing to fear under the conduct of such a general. The imprudent caution of Obeidah,

dah, who was of a mild and quiet disposition, and slow in his operations, had damped the spirit of the soldiery, who before were much better pleased with the impetuous ardour of Khaled; and yet that general was so far from sparing the troops, that he often greatly exposed them: but he never spared himself; and tho' his enterprizes were sometimes extremely rash, he was brave and fortunate, and always came off with honour.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

At the time he arrived to take upon him the command of the army, Sergiabil, a mussulman captain, was advanced to Bosra*, by order of Obeidah; who, to avoid being shamed by a total inactivity, had sent him with a detachment to besiege that place. Sergiabil thought at first that the town would not hold out long, on account of a step which had been taken by the governor the moment the mussulman troops sat down before that fortress: he came to the commander, and asked him what was his design; and Sergiabil having answered, To oblige the city to embrace Mahometism, or become tributaries: the base governor, who was in a condition of making a good defence, submitted to the Mussulman's demand, and returned to the city with a view of persuading the inhabitants to surrender.

The Mussulmen besiege Bosra.

* Bosra, heretofore the metropolis of Arabia, is a city of great trade, and very strong. It must not be confounded with Basrah, or Bassorah, a maritime town on the persian gulph.

ABUBEKRE.

Hegyra 11.

Ch. æt. 632.

They are re-
pulsed.

The people, far from listening to him, resolved to defend themselves; and at the same time sallied out, and made an offer of battle. Sergiabil accepted it; but before he fell on, he uttered this prayer to God: "Oh God! who hast promised to thy prophet Mahomet the conquest of this country! Most great and sublime God! assist us against those that reject thy unity." But this prayer was not heard, for the Mussulmen were broke, and repulsed in great disorder. News was immediately sent to the general, of the miscarriage of this enterprize: but Obeidah, who had directed it, was departed, and Khaled had taken the command in his stead.

Khaled

comes to the
succour of the
besiegers.

Khaled marched immediately with a body of troops to the assistance of Sergiabil; and seeing at his arrival the small number of forces that officer had under his command, he highly rebuked him, for daring to attempt the siege of such a place, and accepting a battle with so few troops. Sergiabil excused himself, saying, he had done nothing of his own head, but had only obeyed the orders of Obeidah, who was his commanding officer. "I have no more to say," replied Khaled briskly; "Obeidah is a thorough honest man; but, in truth, he knows very little of the art of war."

It was necessary then to take fresh measures, and to try by what means they should reduce a city, the inhabitants whereof seem-
ed

ed bent on making an obstinate defence. ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.
Khaled afforded but one day's rest to the troops he brought with him : he made use of that time to reconnoitre, in person, the place he designed to attack, and issued orders for raising additional works to strengthen his camp. He proposed to have given his troops another day's rest, but receiving information from his spies, of a motion which seemed to be making by the townsmen, he immediately drew up his army in order of battle, and employed the time he had left, in making the purifications directed by Mahomet ; and closed that ceremony by a public prayer, which he pronounced at the head of his army.

The besieged soon sallied out, headed by their governor in person. Khaled, who was prepared to give them a good reception, caused his troops to move on, and directly gave the signal for battle. But at the time that all things seemed to prognosticate a very bloody action, the governor sent one of his officers to Khaled, to demand a conference.

Khaled having consented to it, the generals advanced to the midst of the ground that lay between the two armies. The governor informed the mussulman general, Conference between Khaled and the governor of Bosra. that he was greatly inclined to embrace his religion ; that he had made several attempts to prevail on the inhabitants of Bosra to follow his example ; but that hitherto he had failed therein : that he hoped he should still

ABUBECRE. bring them to comply; but that he was desirous previously to guard himself against all events: to which end, he desired they would grant him a safe conduct for his life, his effects, and in general for his whole family.

Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

The cowardly governor was greatly amazed at the answer Khaled returned him: "You are suspected by your troops," said he, "as well on account of the proposals you have made them, as of the conference you are now holding with me. You will certainly be accused of treachery, and of keeping up a correspondence with the Faithful; on which account the inhabitants will decline listening to you, and perchance may evil-intreat you. Now I see but one way to re-instate you in their good opinion; which is, to make a shew of ending the common quarrel, between us two; therefore you must fight with me forthwith."

Feigned combat between the leaders of the two armies.

Romanus, (for so the governor was called) stunned by the proposal, would willingly have declined the combat; but in the manner it was proposed by Khaled, he could not refuse it. The troops on both sides were equally amazed, to see their generals begin a single combat: But as orders were given by each party to prevent their troops from stirring, they quietly waited for the issue of that event.

That combat, which was to have been no more than a jest, to impose on the inhabitants

bitants of Bosra, seemed very serious to the governor; and he asked Khaled, who put him hard to it, and dealt him many sound blows, whether he meant to kill him. Khaled, who had a satisfaction in seeing the confusion of his dastardly antagonist, answered with a smile, That he had no ill design; but that, as well for the sake of their honour, as to take away all cause of suspicion, it was necessary to convince the spectators, it was not a mock fight.

The combat, therefore, was continued some time longer, sorely against the will of the governor; who, finding himself wounded and bruised in several places, at last quitted the field of battle, and joined his troops. He marched back with them into the city, and again attempted to persuade them to surrender to the Mahometans. The inhabitants, more enraged than ever against their governor, highly reproached him for his treacherous and cowardly behaviour in the fight with Khaled, and formed a resolution to prevent him from disgracing them for the future, either by his conduct or council. They confined him to his own house, and placed a strong guard over him; and this post was given, with their unanimous consent, to the general of the troops which Heraclius had sent to their assistance: but they at the same time required of him, that he should fight Khaled in single combat.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

The governor of Bosra tries to prevail on the inhabitants to surrender.

The inhabitants deprive him of the command.

ABUBECRE.

Hegyra II.

Ch. ær. 632.

Combat between Abdarrahan and the new governor.

The general accepted the proposal, and sent Khaled a challenge. When the defiance was brought, Abdarrahan, the son of Abubecre, was with the mussulman general. That young man, burning with a desire of signalizing himself, was so very importunate with Khaled, that he gave him leave to fight in his stead.

Abdarrahan, well mounted and armed, advanced towards the grecian general, who met him half way. The two armies fronted each other; and in their presence the two champions were going to dispute for the honour of victory; but the advantage again fell to the Mussulmen. The grecian general was daunted at the bold countenance of young Abdarrahan, and at the great readiness with which he handled his lance: and so great was the impresson it made on him, that he soon found he had over-rated his courage, in complying with the terms the Greeks had required of him.

The general, however, strove to master his fears, and ventured to attack his adversary; but at the first wound he received, his courage failed him, and he just preserved so much presence of mind as to get out of his enemy's hands. He made a feint, and dextrously turning his horse, fled full speed towards Bosra.

Abdarrahan immediately pursued him, but the Grecian's horse being extremely fleet, soon carried that general out of the Mussulman's

Mussulman's reach ; who, being enraged at so mean-spirited a behaviour, boldly advanced even to the grecian army, and dealt wounds and death all around him. Khaled, terrified at the danger Abdarrahan was running upon, forthwith gave the signal, and the mahometan army fell with great fury on the Greeks, to disengage the Caliph's son.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

Thus the temerity of that young captain brought on a general action ; and the Mussulmen, excited by the risk he ran, fought so desperately, that the Grecians were broke on all sides, and put to a total rout. The whole mahometan army rang with acclamations of joy and victory ; whilst the Christians, who had escaped the sword of the enemy, thought only of flying, in the greatest disorder, to take shelter within the city ; and were happy that they could shut their gates in time, to prevent their adversaries from following them there.

The Mussulmen gain an advantage over those of Bosra.

Such of the Christians as were not engaged in the sally, either on account of their condition, sex, or any other reason, were however spectators of it from the ramparts, and saw both the battle, and the defeat of their troops. The wretched inhabitants filled the air with their groans, their outcries, and their prayers. They had the misfortune to see their parents, friends, and countrymen, either slaughtered or made captives : and, after

ABUBEKRE. after such a defeat, they themselves had but too clear a prospect, that, without the assistance of a miracle, they could not escape from their enemies; and that their wives, their children, and their effects, must fall a prey to the conqueror.

Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

Amidst the hurry and confusion of their affairs, they were forced to use their utmost efforts for preserving a city so important as Bosra: and the council could think of no better means, considering the posture of their affairs, than to write advice immediately to the emperor, of the extremity they were reduced to; and intreat from him speedy assistance. Besides which, they gave orders that strict watch should be kept for the security of the place, and that they should endeavour, at least, to remain on the defensive till they could hear from the emperor.

Romanus
gives up the
city to the
Mussulmen.

But whilst those unhappy Christians were soliciting for succours, and were driven to despair at the thoughts of their great distance, Romanus, their treacherous governor, whom they had deposed, and confined to his house, inwardly rejoiced at the public calamity, and was even then plotting to compleat his black designs.

The house of that traitor stood at one of the extremities of the city; insomuch that the walls of Bosra partly inclosed his garden. He employed his children and servants to make a hole in the wall big enough to let in a man easily. At this aperture he got out
long

long before day, and was going to the arabian camp, when he was stopped by a mahometan officer, who came up to him with his lance couched.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra II.
Ch. 632.

It was Abdarrahan, son of the Caliph, who was on guard that night. Romanus, who remembered him (having seen him with Khaled) declared who he was, and desired he might be forthwith conducted to the general, he having an affair of importance to communicate to him. Khaled could not help smiling when he saw Romanus, as the idea of that coward's looks during their late combat came fresh into his mind, and he asked him with a sneer, how he fared.

To this insulting question, which must have made him blush with shame, Romanus avoided making an answer, and being eager to give the finishing stroke to his treachery, he told the general the cause of his coming. He then related to him what ill treatment he had met with from the inhabitants of Bosra, and the schemes he had laid for revenging himself. "Let me have only two hundred men," said the traitor to him, "headed by one of your bravest officers, and I will answer for it, that before day, you shall be master of the place." He then explained to him in few words the manner of his getting out of the city, and made it appear to him, that the same means might easily be made use of to get in soldiers.

This

ABUBECRE.

Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

This scheme appearing practicable to the general, he forthwith called for two hundred choice men, and sent them under Abdarrahan's command to Bosra. Romanus performed the office of guide to the detachment, and having conducted them to the opening he had made in his garden wall, unperceived of any person, he conveyed the whole party into his house, and gave them grecian habits, that they might spread themselves over the whole city, without raising any distrust in the inhabitants.

Abdarrahan divided his detachment into equal moieties, which he again subdivided into eight companies of twentyfive men each; four of which bands were appointed at the same time to seize the four gates of Bosra; and the other four subdivisions were to remain drawn up in the principal square; and from thence to spread themselves in different parts of the city, so soon as the signal should be given.

To the misfortune of the Grecians, these measures succeeded but too well. So soon as the captain of the band had given the signal, the troops in the square dispersed themselves into all parts, crying out, "Allah-ac-bar," that is to say, "God is very great." At which cry the soldiers, who were appointed to seize the gates, dispatched the sentinels, and slew the guards. Forthwith the gates were thrown open, and the Mahometans, who impatiently waited for that moment, rushed into the city, and put to the sword all

all they met, without distinction of age or sex. The furious soldiery, breathing slaughter and desolation, were continuing the massacre, when a number of the inhabitants, coming some out of the churches, and others out of their houses, with lamentable cries, begged for quarter.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

Khaled, who happily for them, was within hearing of their cries, immediately put a stop to the slaughter. The soldiers readily obeyed; and as that indulgence of Khaled seemed a little unseasonable, and especially to Christians; that general, to justify his conduct, alledged that Mahomet was wont to say; “if it happeneth that any person is slain after having called for quarter, I am innocent of it.” Khaled’s orders were soon spread over the whole city, and the massacre ceased in all parts.

Thus Bosra, that rich and flourishing city, fell into the hands of the Mussulmen, through the base treachery of a wretch who soon forsook Christianity, and openly professed the mahometan religion. He afterwards departed from Bosra, furnished with such safeguards as Khaled thought fit to give him, and retired to the mussulman territories, loaded with the curses of a people, whom he had so shamefully betrayed.

Romanus
turns Mahometan.

Khaled immediately sent an account of this success to Abubecre; and at the same time acquainted him with the design he had formed, for marching without delay to Damascus,

The Mussulmen prepare to besiege Damascus.

ABUBEKRE: mascus, and laying siege to that city. He
Hegyra 11: also wrote to Obeidah, and ordered him
Ch. ær. 632. forthwith to join him with his troops. Obeidah, though deprived of his command, as I have already observed, was not however totally discarded; and as they thought him fitter for the detail of an army, than for a command in chief, he was placed, by way of reserve, upon the frontiers, at the head of a large detachment, with orders to hold himself in readiness for marching to such parts as the necessities of the state should require.

On receipt of Khaled's letter, he began his march with his whole body of troops, and arrived at Bosra; and upon this junction, Khaled resolved on his departure. He left a strong garrison in the place, and then set out for Damascus.

The emperor
sends them
succour.

The grecian emperor having received intelligence of the designs of his enemies, came to Antioch, where he assembled a body of troops, that he might send them to the relief of Damascus. However, he appointed for that purpose no more than five thousand men, reckoning that number sufficient to defend a place which was very strongly fortified, and had a prodigious number of inhabitants capable of bearing arms.

Divisions be-
tween the
governor and
the comman-
der of the
succours.

A captain, named Caloüs, having been appointed, by the emperor, commander of those troops, he forthwith began his march, and soon reached Damascus. His arrival at first gave great joy to the inhabitants, on account of the succour he brought

brought them ; but in a short time the pretensions which were formed by Caloüs raised great heats and animosities. The instructions which the emperor delivered to that general, for the regulation of his conduct at Damascus, were probably so doubtfully expressed, that he might put a more extensive construction upon them than they imported. He insisted on having the sole command in the city, and even required that the governor, who had commanded till the time he arrived, should be forthwith sent out of the town.

ABUBEKRE.

Hegyra 11.

Ch. ær. 632.

The men of Damascus were much amazed at such a demand. They loved their governor, and looked upon him to be a brave officer, right worthy of the trust reposed in him, and more necessary than ever in a place, before which they daily expected the enemy to appear.

The praises which they bestowed on their governor, only served to increase the jealousy of Caloüs ; he became stiffer in his pretensions, and protested he would never give them up. Then discord arose amongst the inhabitants, and each man siding with one of the commanders, as interest or inclination led him, they seemed bent on running to their own ruin ; which fatal misunderstanding set the chiefs as well as the citizens at variance.

During the height of these disturbances, what they had so long feared, at last came to pass. Khaled, at the head of forty thousand

Siege of Damascus.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

men, came in sight of the place. The inhabitants were then forced to suspend their quarrels, in order to provide for their defence, and to prevent the enemy from advancing too near. They therefore made a sally with some detachments, to obstruct them in the carrying on their approaches to the city.

Khaled, not thinking it proper to charge these detachments at that time, only ordered some slight skirmishes to try them. He gave that commission to Derar, an officer for whom he had an esteem, and ordered him to take with him a few horse, and go with his usual bravery, and make trial of the temper of the enemy. Derar immediately departed, and gave signal proofs of his valour; but as there was too wide a disproportion in the numbers, he was repulsed, and again obliged to join the main army. Abderrahman was also desirous of braving the enemy: he came off with the same success as Derar, and like him was forced to yield to superior numbers, and to retire; but that did not prevent either of them from receiving the praises justly due to their bravery.

The general was also desirous of attacking in his turn, and as his quality seemed to bespeak some extraordinary feat from him, he advanced singly near enough the enemy to be heard, (for he refused to be accompanied) and offered to fight any of them, that dared to try the event of a single combat.

Single combat
between Caloüs
and Khaled.

The governor, whom Caloüs would have supplanted, artfully made use of this challenge,

challenge, telling his antagonist, that as he insisted upon having the sole directions of the defence of the city, so he was engaged, in point of honour, to be the first in the accepting the offer of the mahometan general.

ABUBECRE.

Hegyra 11.

Ch. ær. 632.

Caloüs, would very willingly have been excused, but he could not, for shame, refuse it; especially as it was the opinion of all those who were witnesses to the challenge. He therefore undertook it with the greatest repugnance; and as he had a better stomach to treat with the enemy, than to fight, he took care to furnish himself with an interpreter, because he did not understand the arabian tongue.

As he was going to the combat, Caloüs, whose fears grew stronger, as he drew nearer the Mussulman, asked the interpreter to assist him, in case the enemy should be too hard for him. But the interpreter, who was far from being a pugnacious man, desired Caloüs would make no dependance upon him in that respect: he assured him, that in all matters relating to his profession, he would do him all the service lay in his power, and would faithfully relate whatsoever he bid him tell the Mahometan; but as to fighting, he absolutely would not do it, and therefore he must take his measures accordingly.

So blunt an answer was a terrible stroke to the fearful Caloüs; however he continued his march, and came up with Khaled. And the interpreter made him a speech, which he began with the following fable: "A certain man had a flock of sheep, which he intrusted

ABUBEKRE. to the keeping of a careless shepherd, who
 Hegyra. 11. suffered them to be devoured by wild beasts.
 Ch. ær. 632. The master, enraged at his loss, turned away
 the shepherd, and took one more vigilant in
 his stead, who killed the wolf when he re-
 turned for his prey. This," added the in-
 terpreter, "is a true portraiture of your nation.
 Being poor, and in want of everything at home,
 you have hitherto fattened yourselves in this
 delightful country; but here is a general of
 courage and capacity, who hath numerous
 forces under his command, and will duely
 guard the flock, which the emperor hath
 given him in charge."

"That nation," answered Khaled, "whom
 you so insolently reproach for their poverty,
 came out of their country, to take from you
 your riches, your fields, and your cities. I
 have shewn in the neighbouring provinces,
 how great is the power and valour of the
 Arabians, and I will do the same in these
 parts. If thy general is the defender of the
 grecian empire, I am the defender of my
 religion: therefore no more words, for blows
 must decide our quarrel."

Though Caloüs did not understand Kha-
 led's discourse, yet the tone of his voice, and
 the boldness of his countenance, filled him
 with terror. He bid the interpreter propose
 to Khaled the deferring their combat till the
 next day. But the Mussulman, who loved
 fighting too well to delay the pleasure of it;
 and who, besides, prognosticated to himself a
 sure victory, from the confused and fearful
 look

look of his adversary, refused to put it off; and left his enemy should slip from him, he ran, and placed himself between Caloüs and the grecian army.

ABU BECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

The interpreter now finding matters were near a crisis, and judging he could be no longer of any use, left the champions to fight it out, and rode off full speed towards Damascus.

Caloüs therefore finding he must engage, resumed a little courage, and fought at first with tolerable intrepidity; but not being able long to withstand so powerful an enemy as Khaled, he soon began to defend himself but faintly. Khaled, then disdaining to press him any longer, made a side-long motion to close with Caloüs, and dextrously shifting his lance from his left hand to his right, he seized his adversary round the waist, and threw him from his horse to the ground. In an instant the whole arabian army made the loudest acclamations of joy, which cast a great damp on the christian forces.

Caloüs is taken prisoner.

Khaled, after his victory, returned to the Mussulmen with his prisoner, and was preparing to go back to Damascus, when Caloüs demanded a moment's audience of him. The general having been pleased to grant it, Romanus, the base governor of Bosra, who was then amongst the Mahometans, served as interpreter between them.

Caloüs, who, spight of the grief and shame he must have felt, still kept up his resentment against the old governor of Damascus, told Khaled, they must level their

ABUBEKRE. weapons at him ; and if they could kill him,
 Hegyra 11. or even take him prisoner, he would soon
 Ch. ær. 632. become master of the place.

Khaled immediately sent a challenge to the governor, who accepted it, and soon entered the lists. Khaled having hastened up to him, demanded his name : he answered, that he was called Israil. It is to be observed, that, amongst the Arabians, this is the name of an angel, who takes care of the souls of the departed. Khaled could not help laughing when he heard that name: “ Well,” said he briskly, “ so much the better for thee ; the angel Israil, out of respect to thy name, will take care to give thy soul a speedy passage to hell.” Israil, who did not want courage, was not in the least disconcerted at Khaled’s rough compliment ; but, imagining he hinted at the treatment he had bestowed on Calous, Israil asked what he had done with him. Khaled answered, that he had ordered him to be loaded with irons. “ Why,” replied the governor, “ did you not cause him to be put to death ?” “ Because,” replied Khaled, “ it is my intent you should be both beheaded at the same time.” Their conversation was continued no longer, for the two champions attacked each other, and gave proofs of great skill and courage on both sides. Khaled, delighted to meet with an adversary worthy of him, called up all his bravery to his aid, in order to gain the advantage, which he attained after a short combat. Israil, finding that
 victory

victory declared for Khaled, faced about, and took to flight. The Mussulman pursued him at first very briskly ; but the Grecian, who was better mounted, outstripped him. He stopped, however, at some distance, and finding that Khaled's horse was greatly tired, he returned, in order to attack the Mussulman a-new. Khaled straightways alighted, and at the moment Israil was furiously rushing on him, he dextrously ham-stringed his adversary's horse, and thereby made himself master of the rider. He forthwith seized him, and delivered him over to his attendants, ordering them to put him in chains with Caloüs.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

In a short time he went to them, and told them, they must either embrace the mahometan doctrine, or be put to death on the spot. These two captains, whom jealousy, hatred, and the lust of power, had set at the greatest variance, now seemed to have but one heart, one mind, and one opinion : and, being enlightened by a ray of the divine grace, which inspires men with strength and courage in the time of need, they made a noble sacrifice of both life and fortune to their redeemer, and died glorious martyrs to Christianity. Khaled caused them both to be beheaded, and ordered their heads to be thrown over the walls of Damascus, that the citizens might know the fate of their generals.

Israil and Caloüs are put to death.

These are, nearly, the chief events which fell out at the siege of Damascus ; at least,

Reflections upon the arabian writer.

ABUBEKRE. Alvakedi, an arabian historian, from whom Hegyra II. Ch. ær. 632. I have extracted this account, doth not inform us of any more than I have related. But it will doubtless seem very astonishing, that a numerous army of Mahometans, who set out with a resolution of propagating their religion, or gaining tributaries by fire and sword, should lay siege to a place, which they proposed to attack with the utmost vigour, and that the whole should dwindle to a few single combats, which, ending in the loss of two or three men, could neither advance nor retard the chief object in view. It may therefore be presumed, that the romantic taste, which prevails in almost all the works of the Arabians, induced Alvakedi rather to dwell on the description of duels, jousts, and other feats of arms, which in his sentiments were marvellous, than to inform us, like an historian, of such other events, as must necessarily have passed on so important an occasion.

It should seem, therefore, according to Alvakedi, that not a single transaction worth relating, passed at the siege of Damascus, after the death of Caloüs and Israil. He says, indeed, there were several actions, in all which the Christians were worsted; but as to particulars, he leaves us quite in the dark. So that, having no better guide, I am enabled to give no more than a general account of such matters, as deserved a full and circumstantial relation.

The Greeks, therefore, having been beaten in several engagements with the Mussulmen, their forces were greatly diminished, and they dared make no more sallies. They kept within the walls of their city, and made the best preparations they could for defending themselves, till the emperor should send them relief.

ABU BECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

That prince, who saw of what great importance it was to save such a city as Damascus, immediately raised troops in the several provinces of his dominions, and had at last on foot a body of almost one hundred thousand men. Unhappily this great multitude could be of no use but for a review; the soldiers of which it was composed, had neither seen service, nor were they acquainted with military discipline: they were levies made in haste, and, for the most part, pressed men; the rest of them, being terrified with the stories they had already heard of the Arabians, marched with fear and trembling. From such a militia, no great success could be expected; and, indeed, the emperor's affairs were soon in a most deplorable condition.

Preparation
by the emperor
to relieve
Damascus.

Whilst the Grecians were taking these measures, the brave Khaled kept the city of Damascus in awe. He had made several fruitless attempts to break a lance with some of the Christians, but not a man amongst them dared to engage with him. The Mussulman, who was naturally warm and eager, could

ABUBEKRE. could not brook this kind of inactivity. However, he formed a resolution to lay before the town, hoping thereby to reduce them to the last extremity; and, having blocked up the city on all sides, he fixed his quarters on the eastern part, and Obeidah took up his on the west.

The arabian
generals deli-
berate whe-
ther they shall
raise the siege.

At the time Khaled was repining at this state of rest, which so ill-suited his disposition, intelligence was brought him of the measures which Heraclius was taking, in order to relieve Damascus: In a short time he received a more particular information as to those measures, and an account that the grecian army had begun their march. He therefore forthwith called a council of war, to deliberate what was proper to be done. He was of opinion not to wait for the arrival of the enemy, but to go out and meet them, being firmly persuaded they should certainly defeat the succours: for as that great body was necessarily divided, for the convenience of marching, it would be easy to beat the several divisions successively; and by those separate engagements destroy a numerous army, which might put them to difficulties, if the several bodies were suffered to join.

Obeidah was of a contrary opinion. He urged of how great importance it was not to leave Damascus, which being reduced to great extremity for want of provisions and ammunition, must inevitably surrender in a few days; whereas, if they determined

to raise the siege, the inhabitants would procure relief of all kinds; and so, what had already been done, would become useless. He agreed, however, that it would be gaining a great point, if they could defeat the troops which the emperor was sending into Syria: but he added, that supposing they should gain a compleat victory, which was not absolutely certain, they must still return to Damascus; which, having had time to recruit their stock of ammunition and provisions, would be enabled to make a long resistance. He concluded with observing, that the succour in question being still at a great distance, it would be much more prudent to push on the siege; and when once they were masters of the place, they might easily maintain the possession of it, and even make it serve as a rampart to the Mussulmen against the Greeks.

This opinion appeared to be very judicious; the council unanimously concurred in it, and even Khaled himself readily came over to Obeidah's sentiments. The men of Damascus were greatly alarmed to see a formidable enemy still before their walls. Besides, the troops Heraclius had sent to relieve them, marched very slowly, and it was to be feared their provisions, which were now greatly diminished, might be totally consumed during that interval, and they be reduced to the fatal necessity of perishing by
hunger,

ABU BECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch.ær. 632.

hunger, or submitting to the yoke of the Mahometans.

The Dama-
scenes offer
terms which
are rejected.

The idea of that wretched alternative, put them on contriving different expedients, to extricate themselves from the unhappy condition they were reduced to. Amongst others, they offered to corrupt Khaled, to induce him to raise the siege. They privately sent messengers to that general, and offered him considerable sums of money, with other valuable presents, if he would consent to depart from before their town. But Khaled, who scorned to listen to such a proposal, sharply answered, they had only two measures to follow, which were, either to embrace Mahometism, or to become tributaries; and if they did not approve of those conditions, arms must decide the quarrel.

The inhabitants of Damascus, greatly confounded at Khaled's firmness and resolution, resolved to be more careful than ever in guarding their city, and were in daily expectation of a reinforcement which never arrived. After some weeks, which passed in a continual disquietude, they were informed the long-look'd-for succour was near at hand. This news filled the whole town with joy. The acclamations of the citizens were heard even in the camp of the Arabians, who concluded, that something extraordinary must have happened to them.

They were not long unacquainted with the cause of it: Khaled's scouts brought him intelli-

intelligence, that the grecian army was on the march, and would soon reach Damascus. A new council was therefore held, in which Khaled returning to his former opinion, proposed the army's marching with all speed to meet those troops, and endeavour to defeat them, before they came in sight of Damascus. Obeidah also stood by the opinion he had declared in the first council, and strongly insisted on a continuation of the siege.

ABU BECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

These different opinions having been weighed by the council, appeared to be equally supported by reason; they therefore resolved to follow them both. They continued the blockade of Damascus by a body of troops, and at the same time appointed some detachments of choice soldiers, to harass the reinforcements which were not far off.

At the head of those detachments, Khaled placed Derar, a captain already spoken of, and distinguished for his bravery and intrepidity, and who rather needed a curb than a spur. When Khaled sent him forth, he recommended to him above all things, not to expose himself rashly; to make no difficulty of complying with the present exigency, and to retreat to the army, if it should be unadvisable to risque an engagement.

Some Arabian troops are sent to harass the Greeks.

Derar forthwith marched with his detachment to make discoveries, and, burning with impatience to signalize himself against the Christians, it was not long ere he came in fight

ABUBEKRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

fight of them. His troops seeming to be a little daunted at the appearance of so great a multitude, Derar encouraged them by the great boldness with which he spoke to them of the enemy they were about to attack. He put them in mind of the many victories the Mussulmen had gained over them, and that almost always with inferior numbers: and, in short, that a handful of brave men were enough to defeat a numerous army.

Bravery of
Derar.

That gallant captain himself set an example of the most consummate bravery, by advancing boldly towards the enemy, and endeavouring to single out the grecian general. His troops supported him, and the action began. Derar having cut his way even to the enemies standard, attacked the standard-bearer, and killed that officer with his own hand; he forthwith called out to his men to seize the standard, and that he would defend them from the Christians; and he fought so desperately, that he drove away all such as would have fallen on his soldiers, and the standard was carried off.

The grecian
army receive
a reinforce-
ment.

Whilst the grecian army and the arabian detachment were thus engaged, the Greeks received a fresh reinforcement. Verdanus, (which was the name of the Grecian general) had a son, who commanded at Emessa, a city of Syria, lying between Aleppo and Damascus, who came to join his father with a body of ten thousand men, and arrived

at

at the very time Derar was fighting so furiously. This young gentleman, struck at the wondrous bravery of the Mussulman, to free the Greeks from so formidable an enemy, darted a javelin at him, but without success; that is to say, instead of killing him, as he hoped, it only slightly wounded him in the left arm. Derar, enraged, instantly turned about, and gave that young officer so terrible a blow with his lance, that he killed him on the spot, and the head of his weapon stuck fast in his chine.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

The Grecians, bent on revenging the death of that young lord, surrounded Derar on all sides, in order to seize him. The Mussulman performed prodigies of valour to extricate himself from the danger; but he was at last borne down by numbers, and taken prisoner.

Derar is taken
prisoner.

The Arabians, seeing their commander in the hands of the Christians, made amazing efforts to free him, but without success. The Christians stood all their attacks with the greatest firmness, and the Mahometans began to lose their courage. Some amongst them acted as if they meant to retire from the combat; which being observed by Rafebn-Omeirah, he led them back to the enemy, bidding them remember the principles of their prophet's religion. "Do you not know," said he, "that such as turn their backs on the enemy, offend God and the prophet? that paradise is open only to such as fight on until death or victory? and after

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

ter all, what matters it if Derar be killed or taken prisoner? Let us fly then, to revenge his death, or set him free. Follow me, I will shew you the way." Rasi immediately fell on the Greeks, and his troops seconded him with the greatest bravery.

Khaled arriving in the midst of these transactions, his presence augmented the courage of the Mussulmen. He had received intelligence of Derar's being taken, and came with all speed to his relief. That general attacked them so furiously that they were amazed. He several times broke into their squadrons, and particularly in those parts where he saw the most standards and colours, concluding he should find the prisoner there; but his attempts were fruitless, Derar was already at a great distance.

Khaled having attacked the enemy several times without finding Derar, was at last informed of his fate by some deserters from the Christians, who told him, the grecian general had sent that officer, under the guard of one hundred horse, to Emessa, and that his design was to make a present of him to the emperor at the end of the campaign.

Khaled, overjoyed at hearing certain news of that prisoner, instantly ordered Rasi to take with him a detachment of one hundred chosen horse, to march forthwith towards Emessa, and to release Derar at all events.

Rasi

Rafi, who was ready to run all hazards to recover Derar from the power of the Grecians, punctually executed Khaled's orders. He departed with all speed, and causing his soldiers to make forced marches, he shortly came up with the detachment which was conducting Derar.

ABU BECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

Those troops, who did not think of meeting an enemy to fight with in their road, were greatly disconcerted when the impetuous Rafi attacked them with his whole party. The Greeks made but a slight resistance; the greatest number of them fled away precipitately, and such as stood their ground were cut in peices. Derar being thus luckily re-taken, immediately returned, to acquaint Khaled with his happy delivery.

Rafi defeats
the guard who
were conduct-
ing Derar to
Emessa.

He came just in time to congratulate the general on the great advantages he had obtained in the short interval which was employed in freeing Derar. In that interim, Khaled had continually harassed the Grecians, and had conducted himself so skilfully, as to beat the divisions of the christian troops severally, so that their numerous army was no longer able to defend itself: and even such of them as had not yet fought, and were in a condition of facing the enemy, were seized with a panic at the exaggerated accounts they heard of the unbated courage of the Mussulmen. They concluded, it must be owing to fresh troops that succeeded each other, and that possibly the

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra II.
Ch. ær. 632.

whole strength of the Mahometans was collected in order to fight them. This fatal notion occasioned the utter defeat of the Grecians. And thus, to the dishonour of the christian name, a succour of one hundred thousand men was totally ruined, by the bravery of an intrepid leader; who, artfully inspiring his troops with enthusiastic courage, like his own, scarce ever failed of success even in the most rash enterprises.

In order to render the overthrow of so considerable an army as compleat as possible, Khaled sent out troops in pursuit of the fugitives. The unhappy Christians, who fled in the greatest disorder and confusion, were then cruelly massacred, without being able, or even daring to defend themselves. The conductors of the baggage, and those who were entrusted with the treasure, abandoned all to the conquerors, and even threw away their arms, that they might fly with greater swiftness. The Mussulmen, weary of slaughter, and greedy of plunder, put an end to their pursuit of the Greeks, and began to pillage: they took on that occasion an immense booty, in money, arms, and horses, and returned triumphant to the siege of Damascus.

It is more easy to feel, than to describe the affliction the inhabitants of Damascus were under, when they received the news of so terrible a loss. But, amidst their great consternation,

sternation, their commanders used their utmost efforts to rouse their courage for the defence of a place, which had nothing to depend on, but their own vigilance and activity. They entertained hopes, indeed, that the emperor would send them new succours, but in the mean time they were forced to be perpetually on their guard, for fear of a surprize.

ABU BECRE.

Hegyra 11.

Ch. ær. 632.

Heraclius, equally moved at the deplorable condition of Damascus, and the defeat of the troops he had sent to their relief, made a new attempt to save that city. He directed fresh troops to be levied, which, joined to such of the remains of the last defeat as could be collected, formed a body of seventy thousand men, which the emperor put under the command of Verdanus his general, who had escaped to Ainadin in Syria. He commanded him to omit no means for raising the siege, and even to give battle, if he could not otherwise effect it.

The emperor
sends a new
army against
the Arabians.

Khaled having soon received intelligence of these preparations, thought it necessary to take more precaution than he had formerly done. This new succour, indeed, was not so considerable as the first; but it might be more formidable, not only on account of the bravery of the troops which composed it, but also thro' the skill and experience of the generals, who, reflecting on the errors which had occasioned their late defeat, might take such prudent measures, as to change the face of affairs to their advantage.

ABUBEKRE.

Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

The Arabians
assemble all
their forces.

Obeidah, whom Khaled consulted on that occasion, was of the same opinion with the general, that it was necessary to order all the chief officers, who were quartered at large in different countries, to march without delay, with the several bodies under their command, and to join the main army.

In consequence of this resolution, Khaled wrote a circular letter, which was expressed in the following terms: "Your brethren, the Mussulmen, are in manifest danger of being attacked by a new army of Grecians. Hasten therefore to their assistance, and do not fail being at Ainadin with your troops, where you will find us."

Couriers were thereupon instantly dispatched, who, with the utmost expedition, carried orders to the generals who remained in the several countries of the arabian dominions. The chief of them were Yezid, Sergiabil, Méad, Noman, and Amru. The first commanded in the territory of Balna, on the frontiers of Syria; Sergiabil, in Palestine; Méad, in the country of Harran; Noman, at Tadmor, or Palmyra; and Amru, in Irak. These orders were no sooner received, than each of those generals made preparations to march for the defence of the common cause.

The Arabians
raise the siege
of Damascus.

Khaled, on his part, having made the necessary dispositions for decamping, the mussulman army at last raised the siege of Damascus, and marched in quest of the Grecians.

The

The raising of the siege filled the inhabitants of Damascus with joy; their courage, which had been sunk by so many losses, seemed thereby newly roused up, and they were even desirous of giving a proof of it, by pursuing the Mahometans. This bold design followed from the remonstrances of two brothers, who had gained a great character amongst the Grecians for bravery and skill in the art of war. So soon as they saw the Arabians in motion to begin their march, they offered that they would themselves undertake to harass the enemy, and required to be furnished with six thousand horse, and ten thousand foot. These being granted them, Paul (which was the name of the eldest) put himself at the head of the cavalry; and the youngest, called Peter, took the command of the infantry.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

So soon as they saw the enemy in full march, they sallied out of the town, and fell with great fury on the rear-guard of the mahometan army, in which were placed all their baggage, their riches, their wives, and even their children. Khaled was at first desirous that Obeidah would lead the van of the army, that himself might take the charge of that part of it which contained things so dear to them all; but Obeidah having represented to him, that it was more becoming for the general to continue at the head of his troops, and that it would be a pleasure to him to command the rear-guard, Khaled was unwilling to disoblige him.

The Damascenes pursue them.

ABUBEKRE.

Hegyra 11.

Ch ær. 632.

They de-
feat the rear-
guard of the
Arabians.

But that general dearly repented it. Paul, at the head of his cavalry, furiously attacked Obeidah, and put him hard to it; whilst Peter, with his infantry, fell on the baggage, and carried off the women, the children, the treasure, and all the booty the Arabians had taken from the Greeks.

Peter, finding himself master of such immense riches, began to think of securing them; he provided himself a strong escort, with which he took the road to Damascus, there to lay up his booty; and left his brother and the rest of the troops fighting with the Mussulmen. Paul, with unbated ardour, performed prodigies of valour, and at last totally defeated the mahometan rear-guard. Being satisfied with the advantage he had gained, he retreated in good order, and went to join his brother.

Khaled was not informed of this misfortune, till it was too late to apply a remedy. He was vexed with himself for his compliance with Obeidah's request; but he soon took his resolution, and, tho' he was of a very passionate temper, he only said, "God's will be done; I would have taken the conduct of the rear-guard; Obeidah would not have it so, and now you see the event."

However, that the Christians might not go away with the glory of having beaten the Mussulmen, Khaled forthwith sent out several detachments, whom he ordered to use
their

their utmost efforts to come up with the enemy before they could reach Damascus. Kais-ebn-Obeirah, Abdarrahan, Derar, and some other chosen officers, were appointed to command the detachments; and Khaled himself soon afterwards began his march with a large body of the army.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

Derar was particularly concerned to come up speedily with the Christians. His sister was amongst the prisoners they had taken, and it was of great consequence to him not to leave her long in their possession. He therefore was one of the first that came upon them, and attacked the body under Paul in their retreat. The Mussulman fought so furiously, that he soon routed all such as were about the christian general, whom he also attacked, and was about to pierce him with his lance, when Paul cried out: "Hold, hold; in sparing me, you save the lives of your wives and children, whom we are conducting to Damascus."

At these words, Derar with-held his hand, that he might not give the Christians cause to make reprisal on the prisoners they had in their custody. He left that general under the guard of some soldiers, and hastened to release his sister and the other prisoners.

All this diligence of the Mussulmen would have proved ineffectual, if Peter, in making his retreat, had been guided by the same prudence as induced him to retire. The combat which had been maintained by his brother,

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær, 632.

afforded him full time to have reached Damascus, but a fatal curiosity moved him to halt at some distance from that city, on a very pleasant spot.

It is true the troops were excessively fatigued, and stood in great need of rest and refreshment; but instead of tarrying no longer than was necessary to give them a little breath, he stopped, and even pitched his camp there. Whilst they were erecting the tents, he thought fit to bestow his time in examining the particulars of the great booty he had taken from the Arabians: but his real view was to satisfy his curiosity in respect to the women he had taken prisoners. The greatest part of them had been so highly commended for their beauty, that he could not think of going to Damascus till he had feasted his eyes with a sight of them.

But he paid very dear for this unhappy curiosity, which was not only ill-timed, but unseemly in a christian general, who was fighting in defence of his faith. Amongst these women there was one of admirably beauty, whom the general fell violently in love with; and to so high a pitch did his passion rise, that he declared he would resign his title to all the rest of the booty, for the possession of that woman, whom he should look on to be a sufficient share. The rest of the women fell to the lot of the other officers, who at the same time divided the remainder of the booty amongst them.

The booty having been thus ordered, the general and the other officers retired to their tents, to take a little refreshment. And all this passed with as much security, as if they had nothing to fear from their enemy, who, however, was not very far off.

ARUBECRE.

Hegyra II.

Ch. xx. 632.

In the mean time the prisoners, who were all placed in one tent, discoursed on the extraordinary allotment which had been just made of them in their own presence. One of the chief women, named Caulah, addressed her fellow-prisoners in the following terms: "Did you not observe the influence of the conquerors, who came and examined us, like a prey that cannot escape out of their hands? What think you of the wretched fate we are threatened with? Shall we suffer ourselves to be given up to these infidels, to satiate their lusts? Ah! why shall we not rather chuse to die, than become the slaves of these idolaters? If you will follow my example, I am confident we shall be able to get out of their hands; or, at least, shall finish our days by a glorious death."

"The patience with which we have hitherto seemed to bear our misfortunes," answered one of the prisoners, named Offeirah, "is the pure effect of necessity, and not the consequence of a want of courage: but alas! what can we do? we are quite defenceless, and have no hopes of getting arms into our possession."

"How!"

ABUBEKRE.

Hegyra 11.

Ch. ær. 632.

“How!” replied the bold Caulah briskly, “what prevents us from seizing the pickets of the tents, and making use of them to repel these infidels? Come on, let us forthwith take up the only weapons we can now procure: let us stand close to each other, and dispose ourselves into a circle, that we may make head on all sides. Perhaps heaven will assist us to beat our enemies; but if our prayers are not heard, we shall, however, die honourably.”

This courageous resolution did not flow from an impotent rage. Those women had, for the most part, truly military inclinations; and especially such of them as were of the tribe of Himiar, or the Homerites. They were early trained to manage the steed, and to handle the bow, the lance, and the javelin. In their fury, they were scarce less formidable than the most veteran soldiers; so that it is no great wonder to find them form so desperate a resolution, in so critical a juncture.

The prisoners unanimously came into Caulah’s design; they instantly tore up the pickets of the tents, and made ready to repel all such as should dare to attack them.

A grecian soldier was the first that felt their fury. Not imagining those women could seriously think of defending themselves, and especially with such weapons, he jeered them for their military appearance; but, to his misfortune, having approached too

too near them, Caulah gave him a violent blow with her picket, and beat out his brains.

ABU BECRE.

Hegyra II.

Ch. ær. 632.

Some comrades of the unfortunate soldier, in order to revenge his death, fell on the women sword in hand ; when those couragious Amazons defended themselves with surprizing valour : they broke the soldiers swords, and knocked several of them on the head upon the spot.

The noise occasioned by this tumult, drew Peter and the other officers out of their tents ; who, not knowing the cause of it, instantly mounted on horseback. They were greatly amazed to find all the arabian women drawn up in a body, and threatening to destroy all such as should come near them. Peter, in vain, strove to pacify them, by applying in particular to Caulah, and persuading her to give over so strange a design ; but that woman treated him with the utmost contempt, and even threatened to kill him, if he dared to advance.

Though the general was a little disconcerted at this conduct of the mussulman women, yet he thought he should easily get the better of them, by causing a party of horse to surround them. He therefore ordered some cavalry to advance, and feign an attack, with a view to intimidate them ; but the first that advanced became victims to their fury : they violently smote the horses on their fore legs ; and the greatest part of them

ABUBEKRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

them either falling, or rearing an end, threw their riders, who perished by the hands of these heroines.

Peter, finding that these female warriors made so obstinate a defence, in a transport of passion ordered his men to dismount, and attack them sword in hand. He set the example himself, alighted from his horse, and advanced, in order to give the first blow; but they stood the attack with the bravery of the most intrepid soldiers. The Greeks, ashamed of meeting with a repulse, returned to the charge, and would doubtless have cut the whole gallant band into pieces, when all at once a great noise was heard in the camp. Peter having put an end to the combat, that he might learn the cause of it, they saw a great cloud of dust arise at a distance, which was occasioned by a body of horse, whom they heard coming towards them full gallop. This was a large detachment of Arabians, who had made a forced march, in hopes of retaking the prisoners and booty: upon this, Peter and his soldiers immediately remounted.

The Arabians
come to the
relief of the
prisoners.

The sudden arrival of the Mussulmen spread terror amongst the Greeks; and, though the general was very brave, he could not help being greatly alarmed at this unlucky accident: but his concern was increased, when he found the mahometan troops were headed by the invincible Khalid, accompanied by Derar, Caulah's brother.

ther. He found the party was like to be very unequal ; however, he endeavoured to extricate himself from so dangerous a situation, by appearing generous. He spoke to Caulah, and told her, she was at liberty. He was in hopes thereby to make a merit with her, and to engage her to intercede for him with the arabian generals ; but it was now too late ; and that haughty dame made him no other return, but by loading him with scornful contumelious language.

ABUBEKRE.
Hegyra II.
Ch. ær. 632.

Derar soon came up, together with Khalid. The grecian general strove to put the best countenance he could on the matter ; and accosting Derar with an air of unconcern, told him, he presumed he should afford him great satisfaction, by restoring to him his sister. The Mussulman, casting a scornful look on the Grecian, thanked him, and said, “ I am obliged to you for so valuable a present ; but I am very sorry I have only the point of my lance wherewith to shew my gratitude.”

Peter, the general, is killed.

When Caulah heard her brother make use of such language, she was willing to anticipate him, and to have her share in the revenge. She therefore struck Peter's horse so violently over the legs, that she brought him down. Derar forthwith transfixed him with his lance, and, dismounting, cut off his head.

This deed was as it were a signal for the massacre of the Greeks. The Arabians fell on

The Greeks
are massacred.

ABUBEKRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

on them, and made a most terrible slaughter of all such as were not very expeditious in taking to flight. The Mussulmen having thus released their couragious women, and retaken all the baggage, and other effects they had lost when their rear-guard was defeated, marched away with all expedition to re-join Obeidah. That officer had indeed very strongly fortified the camp to which he had retired on his being routed ; but it was still to be feared that Verdanus, who was at the head of a new army sent by the emperor to the assistance of his subjects, might attempt to force the camp during the absence of Khaled, and the other general officers that accompanied him.

Verdanus
misses an opportunity of
attacking the
Arabians.

But, luckily for the Arabians, Verdanus did not think of undertaking the least enterprize. He had posted himself at a little distance from the Mussulmen, and was giving some rest to the succours he had received. The defeat of the first army, induced him to take such measures as he thought would secure the present troops from the same misfortune ; and he declined marching up to the enemy, till his men had quite recovered their fatigue. Though he would not thus have missed the opportunity of attacking the Arabians, had he been careful to provide himself of good spies, and to have gained intelligence of the enemy's motions, as nothing was more easy than to have destroyed the mahometan army,

army, whilst so large a detachment from it was marched away for the recovery of the booty and prisoners: but it seems as if the Christians were strongly with-held by an invisible hand, in every juncture which might have turned out to their advantage.

ABUBEKRE.

Hegyra 11.

Ch. ær. 632.

Khaled therefore heard with great joy at his arrival, that not a step had been taken in his absence; and it did not even appear that the Christians were disposed to go upon action. The Mussulman general took advantage of that interval to give his troops some respite. The whole arabian camp was then filled with joy. Those who had accompanied Khaled and Derar in pursuit of the Christians, related to their comrades the wondrous exploits of Caulah and her companions, who had so bravely defended themselves. The fame of those heroines was spread through the whole army; the officers and soldiers, delighted with actions so glorious and amazing, found themselves inspired with fresh courage; and earnestly intreated that they, in their turn, might be furnished with a speedy opportunity of signalizing themselves against the Christians.

Paul, that gallant grecian officer, who had been taken prisoner, after having given proofs of the most heroic bravery at the time the arabian rear-guard was defeated, was soon informed of the enemy's success, and his brother's unhappy fate. Khaled himself acquainted him with the melancholy news.

Paul refuses to embrace Mahometism, and is be-headed.

ABUBEKRE.
Hegyra 11.
Ch. ær. 632.

news. He caused Paul to be brought before him, and told him, he must that moment embrace the mussulman doctrine, or else they would deal with him as they had dealt with his brother.

Paul, shocked at this alternative, asked Khaled what treatment his brother had met with. "He is dead," replied the general, "and here is his head;" and at the same time they produced to the unhappy Greek the head of his brother. Derar had brought it himself on the point of his lance, and came to the camp with that bloody proof of his victory.

At the appearance of such an object, Paul was seized with the most lively affliction; he could not help shedding tears for the loss of a brother whom he had always tenderly loved: but soon resuming his courage, he boldly answered, that he would neither become a Mussulman, nor survive his brother. The order was immediately given, and his head was cut off.

All these things passed, as it were, in sight of a succour of seventy thousand men, which Verdanus seemed bent to render useless, by the very precautions he took to employ them to advantage. But this was not the only misfortune he brought on the Greeks by his ill-timed slowness. The reinforcements which Khaled had sent for from all parts, had time to join him; and that augmentation of forces enabled the Mussulmen to
carry

The Arabians
receive rein-
forcements.

carry all their projects against the Christians into execution. And, what is most amazing, the several corps; though they came from different countries, for the most part very distant from each other, arrived at Ainadin exactly the same day. The Arabians dignified that event with the appellation of a miracle; and the idea they then entertained, that heaven so manifestly interposed in their favour, contributed to increase their courage as well as their enthusiasm.

ABUBEKRE.

Hegyra 11.

Ch. ær. 632.

Khaled, willing to take advantage of the ardour of his troops, in order to hazard a battle with the Christians, commanded that the Grecian army should be previously reconnoitered. The brave Derar, so famous for his gallant atchievements, desired to be intrusted with that commission. Khaled consented; but charged him only to observe the enemy, and not to expose himself by any means.

Hegyra 12.

Ch. ær. 633.

Derar immediately departed, and rode several times round their camp, in order to gain certain intelligence of the disposition of the christian army. Verdanus having espied Derar, sent out thirty horse, with orders to seize and bring him to the general. Derar saw them coming, and feigned a flight, supposing they would certainly pursue him; and the grecian horsemen following him close, Derar, who seemed flying full of speed, all at once faced about with his lance couched, and killed the soldier who was nearest him. This first blow was followed by another equally

Extraordi-
nary bravery
of Derar.

ABU BECRE. successful : in short, he fought so desperately
 Hegyra 12. in the midst of the party who strove to sur-
 Ch. ær. 633. round him, that he killed or dismounted
 seventeen of them ; and the residue were so
 daunted at the amazing resistance he made,
 that they dared not to approach so terrible an
 enemy. Derar, finding himself quite ex-
 hausted with fatigue, made a prudent retreat,
 and rejoined Khaled.

Reflection
 upon that
 fact.

I must confess it is scarce credible that a
 single man, how brave soever one may sup-
 pose him to be, could make head against thirty
 horsemen, kill seventeen of them, and at last get
 off without receiving a single wound in so ex-
 traordinary a combat. A fact of this sort, as
 well as some others I have already related,
 would much better suit a romance than his-
 tory. But such is the manner of the arabian
 writers ; they give a loose to the warmth of
 their imaginations ; and, as they are naturally
 rather poets than historians, they on all occa-
 sions deal largely in the marvelous, which
 seems much more to their taste, than that
 plainness and simplicity which truth requires.
 The fact I have just now related, is taken
 from Alvakedi, one of the most famous his-
 torians amongst the Arabians. I would wil-
 lingly have suppressed it, as I have several of
 the like nature ; however, I thought it right
 not to omit them all, that the reader may
 know what was the character of the his-
 torian.

But

But however that was, Derar returning, gave Khaled an account of the discoveries he made, as to the numbers, posture, and appearance of the enemy; and assured him, that every thing seemed to promise a certain victory to the Mussulmen.

ABU BECRE.
Hegyra 12.
Ch. ær. 633.

In consequence of this intelligence, Khaled resolved to attack the enemy without delay. He formed his army in battalia, and appointed the several general officers their posts. Méad and Noman were placed at the head of the right wing; he gave the command of the left to Saëd and Sergiabil; and he intrusted to Yezid the guard of the baggage, women, and children.

The arabian
and christian
armies pre-
pare for
battle.

That general also employed those brave heroines, who had so signalized themselves in fighting against the Greeks when they were taken prisoners. Khaled formed them into two battalions, the command of which he gave to Caulah and Offeirah.

Khaled then went thro' all the ranks to animate the soldiers, and to bid them exert their utmost courage in an affair that would be decisive. He stopped some time at the battalions composed of the arabian women; he repeated the compliments he had already made them, on the proofs they had given of their bravery. He told them, he made great dependance on their body, to secure the success of the battle; he desired of them in particular to have a strict eye over the behaviour of his

ABUBEKRE. troops, and to massacre all such as should turn
 Hegyra 12. their backs on the enemy.
 Ch. ær. 633.

That general having thus made the necessary dispositions, put himself at the head of the center, and kept with him Amru, Abderahman, Kais, Rafi, and several other officers of distinction, in whom he placed a confidence, and on whom he could depend for an exact and prudent execution of his orders.

Verdanus, on his side, also disposed his army in the most advantageous manner he could. He drew them up in battle array, and then harrangued his soldiers; told them of how great importance it was, that they should not be slack or disheartened in a matter which would determine the fate of Syria. He urged every argument he thought capable of strengthening their resolution, and concluded with observing to them, that their forces were greatly superior to the enemy; and if they shewed a common share of boldness and courage, they might depend on gaining the victory.

Conferance
 between Kha-
 led and a
 messenger
 from the
 christian
 army.

The two armies being thus in sight of each other, waited only for the signal to begin the action, when they saw a venerable old man issue from the ranks of the Grecians, who advanced up to the Arabians, and asked to speak with the general. They immediately brought him to Khaled, to whom he said: "Are you the general of this army?" "They will look upon me to be so," replied Khaled, "so long as I obey God, the laws,
 and

and the doctrine of the prophet; so long as I shall perform my duty, and shew my zeal to my country; otherwise I have no authority over it."

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 12.
Ch.ær. 633.

"You are come," replied the old man, "to attack the Christians, to ravage their provinces, and to enrich yourselves with their spoils, without their having provoked you by a single act of hostility. Be not so puffed up with your success; the army with which you are about to engage, is much more numerous, and, perhaps, better disciplined than yours. Why will you risk a battle, which must cost both the Arabians and the Grecians so much blood? You may, by retiring, prevent the misfortunes which equally threaten both nations. If you consent to take that step, I am authorized to offer you in return valuable presents, not only for yourself, but also for the Caliph your master, for all your officers, and even for every one of your soldiers."

"There is no peace to be expected," replied Khaled haughtily, "unless the Greeks embrace Mahometism, or become tributaries: and as to the valuable gifts you mention, be assured we shall soon become masters of them."

The old man retiring, went and carried Khaled's answer to the Grecian general, who thereupon resolved to hazard a battle. The action was begun by the armenian archers, who, marching up to the Mussulmen within bow shot, let fly a volley on the Arabians,

The armies
engage.

ABUBECRE. and killed and wounded a great number of
 Hegyra 12. their men. Khaled, who had his views,
 Ch. ær. 633. quietly stood the volley, and would not even
 suffer the troops to make the least motion.

But the impetuous Derar, who burned with
 impatience to engage, came to the general, and
 earnestly begged he would give him leave to
 attack that detachment. Khaled having
 complied with his request, Derar, at the head
 of a body of horse, fell with so much fury on
 the Armenians, that they were ready to give
 ground, when they were supported by fresh
 troops, whose bravery revived their courage.
 The mussulman general having also sent some
 troops to the assistance of Derar, the action
 was very bloody, and great numbers were
 killed on each side, but the Christians loss was
 the greatest.

Verdanus de-
 mands a con-
 ference, in or-
 der to surprize
 Khaled.

Khaled was preparing to march up the rest
 of his army, and the action was on the point
 of becoming general, when the grecian com-
 mander, fearing he should lose the bat-
 tle, resolved to put in practice an infamous
 scheme he had lately concerted with the chief
 officers of his council.

He sent deputies to Khaled, and demanded
 a suspension of arms, and at the same time a
 conference, on account of an essential matter
 he had to communicate to him. Khaled
 granted the request, and, to the great astonish-
 ment of the officers, and even of the com-
 mon soldiers, they heard a retreat sounded,

at

at the very time all things seemed to promise a sure victory over the Christians,

ABU BECRE.
Hegyra 12.
Ch. ær. 633.

Verdanus, highly pleased at the event of his negotiation, thought himself sure of succeeding in the base project he had formed: but that perfidious general did not know his secret was discovered, and that Khaled had so readily complied with his request, only the better to manifest the treachery of the Grecians dealings, and afterwards to take the most signal revenge for their proceedings.

Verdanus designed to have assassinated Khaled. That gallant Mussulman was the scourge of the Christians, and Mahomet had some reason to call him the sword of God. But as it was far from being an easy matter to get rid of that general by a generous and open attack, Verdanus proposed to steal on him like a traitor; and so soon as Khaled should have consented to the conference which was appointed to be held the next day, Verdanus had projected to send ten horsemen in the night time, who were to lie in ambush near the place for holding the sham conference, and who were to rush out and massacre Khaled, upon a signal that was to be given them. This the Greeks have been pleased to call a stratagem, but surely that appellation does not suit with so infamous a piece of treachery.

The whole was revealed to Khaled, by a Greek named David, the same man whom Verdanus had appointed to negotiate the interview. Khaled sent him back to his

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 12.
Ch. ær. 633.

master, and bid him say, he would not fail being at the place appointed.

The mussulman general related all the particulars of this affair to his chief officers, when, after the cessation of arms, they crowded round him to know the cause, why he had stopped thus in so fair a way to victory. They were all equally enraged at the villainous behaviour of the Grecians; and each of them proposed different ways of revenging the base design. But Khaled said, it did not deserve that they should take any extraordinary measures; and added, that he intended to go alone to the rendezvous; and he undertook that he would bring back the heads of every man of the ambuscade.

The officers strongly opposed such a design; they remonstrated to the general, that indeed they doubted not of his being able to execute such an enterprize, but prudence required he should not expose himself without necessity; and since he was bent on going to the rendezvous, he ought, at least, to be attended by a guard, even tho' it should consist of no more men than those lying in ambush.

Derar slays
the soldiers,
whom Ver-
danus had
placed in am-
bush.

Derar also opposed Khaled's design; but he was not of opinion that they should wait till the next day before they fell on the ambuscade; and he begged the general would permit him to go out for intelligence near that place, after night should be a little set in. Khaled having consented, Derar, soon after
the

the close of day took ten soldiers, on whose courage he could depend, and marched towards the place of ambush. He caused his men to halt at a small distance, and pulling off his cloaths, with his sword in his hand, he crept softly along the ground, to avoid being discovered; and advancing in that manner without noise, he at last heard some persons snore. He then approached a little nearer, and saw as plainly as the darkness would permit, ten men, whom he found all fast asleep, with their heads resting on their arms.

ABU BECRE.
Hegyra 12.
Ch. ær. 633.

He was tempted at first to seize the opportunity, and to massacre them all with his own hand; but reflecting, that as he was killing the first, the rest might possibly awake, he returned to his men, and bid them follow him immediately, and to make as little noise as possible. When they arrived, each of them seized his man, and the whole ambuscade was dispatched in an instant.

Derar forthwith resolved he would leave in the same place the soldiers he had brought with him; and for fear they might be discovered by their dress, in case Verdanus should send any spies that way, he caused them to put on the habits of the grecian soldiers they had just killed. He sent immediate advice to the general, of what had passed, and what preparations he had made against the next day's interview. Khaled approved of his measures, and waited impatiently for break of day, that he might go to the place of meeting.

The Arabians are placed in ambush, instead of the Greeks.

As

ABUBEKRE.
Hegyra 12.
Ch. æt. 633.

As soon as it was day light, Khaled drew up his army in order of battle: Verdanus, amazed to see him thus infringe the suspension of arms he had agreed to, immediately dispatched an officer to complain that the promise they had made him was not kept. Khaled bid him not be uneasy; told him, he knew not what it was to break his word, and assured him, he was that moment going to the rendezvous.

Conversation
between Khaled
and Verdanus.

Shortly afterwards he set out, and arrived almost at the same time with the grecian general: they both dismounted, and being seated opposite each other, Khaled began the conference, asking Verdanus what proposals he had to make him. "Offer us reasonable conditions," answered Verdanus, "and we will surrender: we are not enemies to your nation; and as we know you are poor, it is our intention to behave generously to you."

"Wretched Christian!" replied Khaled haughtily, "God hath not brought us so low, as to live on the alms of the Greeks. On the contrary, he hath given up into our hands your wives, your children, and your provinces. What are your gifts to us, when all is ours? You must chuse," added he, rising hastily, "whether you will be Mussulmen or tributaries: I have no other terms to offer the Grecians; if they refuse them, arms must decide the quarrel." He then told Verdanus, he could not suppose he had demanded an interview with no other design but to reiterate proposals,

propofals, which had been fo often rejected; wherefore he muft conclude Verdanus had procured the meeting, in order that they two might decide the controverfy.

ABUBECRE.

Hegyra 12.

Ch. ær. 633.

Upon this Khaled drew his fword. The Grecian general, who remained fitting, immediately rofe up, and, inftead of putting himfelf in a pofture of defence, caft his eyes all around, in expectation of his foldiers. Khaled, enraged at his cowardice, took him by the robe, and fhook him with an air of contempt. And Verdanus crying out for help, thought himfelf out of danger, when he faw fome foldiers coming up cloathed in grecian habits: but he was foon undeceived, for with them appeared Derar, fword in hand. That officer was going to kill the Grecian, but having been prevented by Khaled, he could not help upbraiding him in the moft reproachful terms. “Miferable wretch” faid he, “what is become of thy ambush, in which thou didft propofe to have destroyed the commander of the faithful!

Verdanus, oppreffed with fhame and fear, fell at Khaled’s feet, and begged for quarter. “Thou didft talk then of peace,” answered the Muffulman, “only to procure the means of betraying and affaffinating me. Therefore no quarter for promife-breakers.” At thefe words Derar fmote off the grecian general’s head with his cymetar; after which, it was fixed on the point of a lance, and carried in triumph to the muffulman army.

Verdanus is killed.

The

ABU BECRE.

Hegyra 12.

Ch. ær. 633.

The Greek
army is de-
feated.

The Arabians, animated at the sight of this bloody trophy, shewed the greatest eagerness to fight with those perfidious men, whose leader had been so justly punished. Khaled thought fit to second their ardour, and led them on immediately to the enemy. On which followed a combat, or rather a terrible slaughter, which lasted till night. The Greeks, who were greatly dismayed at the death of their general, lost all courage, when they saw with what amazing intrepidity the Arabians attacked them. They did not even attempt to dispute the victory; for at the first onset the whole christian army was thrown into the utmost confusion. The fugitives retarding one another in their flight, were cruelly cut in pieces. On this occasion the Mahometans took a very considerable booty, which Khaled declared he would not distribute till after the reduction of Damascus; for he designed to resume the siege of that place, and to take advantage of the consternation of the inhabitants, to oblige them to surrender: And Khaled, having given his troops a breathing time, issued the necessary orders for their departure. But before they began their march, he sent an express to the Caliph, to acquaint him with the happy success of his arms; the tenor of which letter was as follows:

Khaled in-
forms the Ca-
liph of his
success.

“ In the name of the most merciful God, Khaled-ebn-Walid the servant of God, to the successor of the apostle of God. I
address

address my prayers to God, who is the only one; and I intreat him for his prophet Mahomet, on whom be the divine benediction. I give thanks without ceasing to God, for having delivered the true believers, destroyed the idolaters, and put out the light of those who walk in the paths of error.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 12.
Ch. ær. 633.

I am to inform you, O commander of the faithful, that we met with the grecian army at Ainadin, commanded by Verdanus, governor of Emessa.—Our enemies have been vanquished; they had even fifty-thousand men killed in two battles: we have lost but four hundred and seventy-two Mussulmen—We are returning to Damascus. Pray to God for our prosperity, &c.”

Abdarrhaman, the Caliph's son, was appointed to carry that letter to Medina, and there to display the glorious feats of the Mussulmen. Abubecre, in a transport of joy to receive such pleasing news from the hands of a young captain, whom he so dearly loved, fell prostrate on the ground, to return thanks to God for the success of his arms. The letter the general had wrote to him, was communicated to the public, and great rejoicings were made thereupon in Medina; in which they were followed by the several provinces of Arabia, amongst whom the news was soon spread abroad.

A great number of Arabians, eager for glory, or rather for booty, came from Mecca, and earnestly solicited the Caliph's permission

The people
of Arabia re-
quire to go to
Syria.

ABUBECRE. fion that they might go and ferve in Syria.
 Hegyra 12. Abubecre feemed willing to grant their re-
 Ch. ær. 633. queft; but Omar having been confulted,
 was of a contrary opinion.

Omar opposes
 it.

He remonftrated to the Caliph, that the major part of thofe who expreffed fo great a defire to march for Syria, were the very perfons who had fo lately taken up arms againft the prophet's difciples, at a time they thought themfelves ftrong enough to oppofe and deftroy Mahometifm. That in the main, it was neither for the fervice of the ftate, nor the advancement of religion, which had moved them to prefent fuch a petition; but that they were induced to it by the hopes of gain, and particularly of fharing the booty after the furrender of Damafcus. That their arrival would caufe heats and animofities in the army: and it was no more than juftice to fuffer thofe who had already ftood the brunt, quietly to reap the fruits of their victory; efpecially as they were ftrong enough to put the finifhing ftroke to their conquest, without new fupplies.

Their remon-
 ftrances on
 that account.

The Caliph being convinced by thefe arguments, came over to Omar's opinion, and refufed the licence that had been fued for, which gave great caufe of difcontent. The inhabitants of Mecca, and in particular thofe of the tribe of the Coraifchites, remonftrated to the Caliph, that it was hard to prevent them from bearing arms in defence of their religion, on pretence they had once made war

on

on the disciples of God's prophet; and that they ought not to be upbraided for what they had done in the days of darkness and ignorance, when they entertained the mistaken opinion, that opposing them was advancing the cause of truth: that as they were all united, both in heart and spirit, under one religion and one faith, they ought to treat them as brethren; and the rather, for that besides the unity of their belief, they were also joined by the ties of blood: that in truth the people of Medina were the first in professing the true religion, and on that account might claim a preference to all other Mussulmen: but it did not follow, that such as were the next to embrace the doctrine of the prophet, and who gloried in being equally zealous for the propagation of Mahometism, should be totally excluded the service.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 12.
Ch. ær. 633.

The Caliph lent a gracious ear to these remonstrances; he held a conference on that subject with Ali and Omar; they concluded it was necessary to comply with the request of the Coraischites; and accordingly they were permitted to join the army. Abubecre undertook to send an account of their coming, in the letter he should write to Khaled, to congratulate him on his success. Abdarrhaman, whom the Caliph had kept with him during that time, was chosen to deliver his answer to the general. He found him on the march towards Damascus, which

The Caliph
grants their
request.

ABUBECRÉ.
Hegyra. 12.
Ch. ar. 633.

which he reckoned to become master of in a short time.

Though the inhabitants of Damascus were greatly dejected, when they received the melancholy information that the emperor's troops had been defeated, yet they resolved still to hold out against the enemy. During the absence of the Muffulmen, they had taken an opportunity to lay in a fresh stock of ammunition and provisions: most part of those who inhabited the neighbouring towns had fled for refuge to that city, with their most valuable effects, to secure them from the enemy, whose arrival they daily expected: insomuch that there was a great multitude of men in Damascus, and but a very small number of soldiers; and it was to be feared, they would not be able to defend themselves against warlike troops, whose courage and hopes were augmented by their continual success.

Khaled resumes the siege of Damascus.

At last, Khaled appeared in sight of the place. He distributed the posts amongst his general officers, and fixed his own quarters towards the east gate. He at the same time appointed Derar to guard the camp; to which end he put under his command two thousand horse, with which he ordered him carefully to scour the country round the camp, that he might prevent their being surprised by the Grecians.

They then began their approaches to the town, which were at first greatly interrupted by

by the besieged. They slew many of the Mahometans with their arrows, and a still greater number by the machines they had mounted on their walls; from which they discharged showers of great stones, and crushed the besiegers. But the troops of Damascus were not so successful in the sallies they made. The Mussulmen gained the advantage in most of them, so that the wretched inhabitants dared no longer to shew themselves without their walls. The extremities they found they were reduced to, made them think of capitulating; and they even resolved to beat a parley without delay, lest the enemy should be provoked to give them worse terms.

ABUBEKRE.

Hegyra 12.

Ch. ær. 633.

An assembly was held to deliberate on that subject. They were unanimously of opinion to treat with the Mahometans, when an officer of eminent rank in Damascus, (though without actual employment) strongly opposed the resolution. This captain was called Thomas, and was son-in-law to the emperor Heraclius. He had used his utmost efforts to rouse their courage, but in vain; the intrepidity of the Arabians had sunk their spirits to such a degree, that they could think of no remedy, but that they must be forced to surrender on such conditions as the enemy would grant.

Prince Tho-

mas prevails

on the inha-

bitants of

Damascus to

sally.

Thomas at last offered to march himself, and head the troops, if they would make another sally. This proposal had its effect;

ABUBEKRE.
Hegyra 12.
Ch. ær. 633.

the troops, animated by the example of so worthy a leader, promised to fight under his banner, and made immediate preparations to march out against the enemy. The Mahometans, on their part, were ready to give a fresh assault, when the troops of Damascus appeared in order of battle.

The Arabians, perhaps, would not have given them time to fall out in so good order, if the besieged had not at the same time made a furious discharge from all their machines, which were so well served as to keep the enemy at a distance. When Thomas had ranged his forces, he gave the signal for battle, by letting fly an arrow against the enemy. Forthwith the action commenced between several detachments, and was at first equally bloody on both sides.

In the midst of the combat, the Christians with great amazement saw a woman in compleat armour, who pressed on to the front rank of the Arabians to fight there. With the first arrow she discharged, she shot the officer who bore the grecian standard through the hand. The standard falling, the Arabians fell furiously on all the troops thereabouts, in order to seize it. They accordingly took it, and handed the standard from man to man, in order to secure it in the rear.

Thomas seeing his standard in the hands of the Arabians, made a desperate attack on their ranks with the troops that were
next

next him, and hewed a passage even to Sergiabil, who then held the standard. The action grew very hot in that part, and the christian general fought with a courage which seemed to promise the greatest success, when on a sudden he was wounded with an arrow, which put out one of his eyes, and forced him to quit the field. The pain of his wound made him stagger; his men supported him, and they were forced to abandon the standard, as well as the advantage they were on the point of gaining, that they might carry the general with all speed to Damascus.

ABUBECRE.

Hegyra 12.

Ch. ær. 633.

This blow, so fatal to the grecians, was given by the same arabian woman who had before wounded the standard-bearer. Not satisfied with her first exploit, she strove to kill the general; and aimed only at him, because she looked on him to be the murderer of her husband. In fact, the first arrow which Thomas discharged as a signal for the battle, had pierced an officer; to whom that woman had been lately married. To the shame of the christian general, the arrow was poisoned; and the venom was of so subtle a kind, that the officer died almost as soon as he was struck, though the wound was otherwise far from being mortal.

The young widow, instead of giving a loose to tears and complaints, studied how she might be revenged; and finding that the shaft which had deprived her of her husband,

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 12.
Ch. ær. 633.

band, came from the hand of the christian general, she formed the bold resolution of taking away his life, or dying on the spot.

Her revenge was not fully satisfied. The general was wounded indeed; but it was soon known that he was in a condition of going again upon action. In a short time after his wound had been dressed, he found himself much better, and would have instantly gone back to the enemy, by his presence to animate the Christians, who were still hotly engaged with the Mahometans. However, the inhabitants of Damascus so earnestly intreated him not to obey the dictates of his courage in his present condition, that he at last consented not to put himself at the head of the troops, but he resolved to post himself at the gate of the city, which led to the place where the troops were engaged, that he might see what passed, and issue such orders as were proper on the occasion.

He had reason to be satisfied with the behaviour of his soldiers: if they gained no great advantage over the enemy, they prevented the Arabians from getting any over them. They fought gallantly on both sides, and did not part till night obliged them to retreat.

Thomas, willing to take advantage of the courage of his troops, resolved to put in execution a project he formed the very instant he had received his wound. It was to make a general sally at all the gates of the city, and suddenly to fall on the camp
of

of the Arabians. He made no doubt but that he should surprize them, especially after so bloody an action as had just happened.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 12.
Ch. ær. 633.

The grecian soldiers eagerly embraced the general's design, and made ready bravely to put it in execution. At the tolling of a bell, which was the signal agreed on, the Christians made a general sally at all the gates of Damascus, and fell on the several quarters which were opposite the gates.

The Grecians
make a second sally.

This sudden irruption was at first successful to the Christians. They easily cut off a great number of the Arabians, who did not in the least expect such an attack; but when they had sounded an alarm, the face of affairs was soon changed.

Khaled instantly gave out his orders, and all the troops of his quarter were soon in a condition to make head against the enemy. He went in person to the attack, where Sergiabil commanded, and arrived most opportunely; for Thomas had thrown the whole body into confusion. The young arabian widow, who had remained with those troops, fought with as great intrepidity as the boldest soldier; 'till at last she was taken prisoner, after having killed with her own hand several grecian soldiers, who attempted to seize her. Sergiabil had also defended himself very bravely against Thomas, who personally attacked him, and who, returning a second time to the charge, would

ABUBEKRE. either have killed Sergiabil, or made himself master of his person, when the mahometan chief, seconded by Abdarrahan, and several other officers, came timely to relieve him. The young widow was by the same means likewise released, and the grecian general, finding he was attacked on all sides, was glad to retreat with the utmost speed to the city.

Part of the christian forces cut in pieces.

But those troops who sallied out and attacked the quarter where Obeidah commanded, met with a sad fate. A body of chosen troops, by order of that general, firmly stood the first onset of the assailants, and, whilst they were kept in play by a brave resistance, the Arabian caused another detachment to advance, who marching a little round about with great expedition, took the Christians in the rear, by which means they were surrounded on all sides.

This evolution occasioned the loss of the whole grecian detachment, who fought, nevertheless, with the utmost courage that fury and despair could inspire; but the Arabians had soon manifestly the advantage. The Christians were cruelly massacred, and not a single man escaped of the whole party which went on the attack. Those that sallied out at the other gates, were likewise very roughly handled; insomuch that the consequences of this sally determined the inhabitants of Damascus to capitulate. In vain did Thomas beg a short respite, that he

he might write to the emperor for succours ; they would not hear him, and were still more bent on endeavouring to make the best terms for themselves they could, when they learned that Khaled had refused to grant a truce which their general had demanded of him.

ABU BECRE.
Hegyra 12.
Ch. ær. 633.

The inhabitants of Damascus were at a great loss in what manner to set the negotiation on foot. Khaled was looked on to be an untractable man, whose sole intent was to take the place by storm, and put all to fire and sword. Obeidah, on the contrary, was more merciful ; he did not wish to shed the blood of the Christians ; his chief aim was to make them embrace the mahometan religion, or become tributaries : to him, therefore, the Grecians resolved they would apply themselves. But in so doing they ran a great risk ; for as Khaled was the chief officer, they could effectually and safely treat with none but him. However, the harshness of Khaled's disposition giving them no room to hope for terms, if they should propose a treaty to him, they resolved to confer with Obeidah at all hazards.

Difference
between the
characters of
Khaled and
Obeidah.

In the first place, they sounded his inclinations by some deputies, whom they sent to him in the night-time out at the gate opposite his quarters ; to whom Obeidah gave a very favourable answer, assuring them that the citizens might come to him, and negotiate a surrender with the greatest safety :

The Grecians
begin a treaty
with Obeidah.

ABUBEKRE. he at the same time sent to them Abu-obei-
 Hegyra 12. rah, one of his principal officers, to con-
 Ch. ær. 633. duct to him such commissioners as they
 should send out for that purpose.

The Christians, highly pleased at so successful a beginning, sent out several of the chief inhabitants with their proposals. The politeness and good-nature of Obeidah caused the negotiators to entertain the greatest hopes of success. They were very honourably received, and when they proposed articles for a surrender, they found that general inclined to grant almost their whole demands. The article they chiefly insisted on was, the preservation of the churches. Obeidah made some difficulty to comply, but at last he consented to their request, with some restrictions: he allowed them seven churches, in which the Christians were to enjoy the free exercise of their religion. The terms having been thus agreed on, Obeidah delivered them in writing to the commissioners, but they were forced to rely on his word for the execution of them, for he declared, that as he was not commander in chief, he could not sign the treaty; however, he demanded to be put into immediate possession of the city, which he purposed to enter with one hundred men only: he required hostages for his security, and having received them, he entered the place.

Khaled had not the least knowledge of these transactions. He was at the same time meditating to storm the town a-new towards the eastern gate which stood over against his quarters. Whilst he was making the necessary preparations for his enterprize, a certain greek priest, named Josias, who had found means to get out of Damascus, and to reach the head quarters, accosted him. He offered Khaled to let him into the place, without the hazard of a fresh assault, and asked no further recompence, but a safeguard for himself and his relations, and all their lands and effects in the territory of Damascus.

ABUBEKRE.
Hegyra 12.
Ch. ær. 633.
Khaled gets
possession of
Damascus by
the treachery
of a priest.

The proposal having been accepted, Khaled sent one hundred men, under conduct of Josias, with orders to seize the eastern gate, to break the chains, and to cry, Allah-acbar, the moment they were in possession of it. The traitor kept his word: The Arabians were let into the city, and soon gave the appointed signal.

Khaled forthwith entered Damascus at the head of his troops, and massacred all such of the inhabitants as he met with in his way. He marched through heaps of the slain up to the square which is bounded by the great church. But how great was his astonishment, when he saw Obeidah in possession of it! and who seemed quiet and unmoved amidst the tumult which Khaled's arrival had caused in the city. He was unarmed, as well as his officers and soldiers, and about him stood a multitude

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 12.
Ch. ær. 633.

multitude of men and women, who shewed as if they thought themselves safe under the protection of that captain.

Obeidah observing in Khaled's looks his astonishment and displeasure, went to meet the general; and, in order to pacify him, said, that God through his goodness being pleased to spare the effusion of mussulman blood, as well as the hazard and trouble of a battle, the city had yielded on terms. "And I have taken it by force," replied Khaled in a fury; "therefore I will give no quarter to the inhabitants."

Disputes between Khaled and Obeidah on the taking of Damascus.

These terrible words threw the wretched Christians into the greatest consternation. Obeidah, still desirous of mollifying the general, represented to him that a capitulation was entered into, that it was even wrote with his own hand, and that the inhabitants would shew it to him, if he would permit them: "And what did you mean," replied Khaled, "by agreeing to a capitulation without having first consulted me? Am not I the general, and can ought be resolved on without my consent? To shew that I am master, I will put every inhabitant to the edge of the sword."

Obeidah, who knew the general was in the right, and in fact he was not bound to observe a treaty concluded without his concurrence, strove to move him by urging arguments drawn from the principles of religion. He remonstrated to him, that

that the capitulation was made in the name of ABUBECRE.
 God and of the prophet: that all the Mussul- Hegyra 12.
 men who were then with him approved it, Ch. ær. 633.
 and, considering the great honour and advantage that would thereby accrue to the nation, he did not expect his conduct would have met with so extraordinary an opposition.

Upon this a great number of officers sided with Obeidah, and used their utmost endeavours to soften Khaled. But in the interim, the Arabians who had followed the general continued the massacre, and even those that were about him resolved to go and have a share of plunder with the rest. Obeidah, having been informed of what passed, mounted his horse, and leaving Khaled for a moment with his officers, he flew to those parts where the soldiers, greedy of booty, and breathing slaughter, were exercising their fury. He commanded them in the prophet's name to cease pillaging, till the difference between him and Khaled was put to an end.

At the name of Mahomet, the tumult subsided by degrees. Obeidah returned to Khaled, whom he still found bent on executing his former purpose. But at last he was struck by some remonstrances which were made him, touching the good effect that it might have for the future, if they should now incline to mercy. They represented to him, that many places still remained to be conquered, and if they treated the inhabitants of Damascus as rigorously as had been proposed,

ABUBEKRE.
Hegyra 12.
Ch.ær. 633.

posed, after a capitulation, (though that capitulation was defective) the Mahometans would become odious ; and the rest of the cities, who probably would hear only the worst side of the question, would look on them as men not to be trusted, and consequently would defend themselves to the utmost extremity, which would cause a great effusion of musulman blood.

Khaled ratifies the capitulation with the Grecians.

These reasons made an impression on Khaled, and he consented to ratify the treaty which Obeidah had made with the citizens of Damascus ; but he demanded that they should previously deliver up to him Thomas, their general, and another officer of note, to whom he was resolved he would give no quarter. However, he receded from his demand on the further representations made by Obeidah, in respect to those two officers. He told him, they were comprized by name in the capitulation, and that it was reasonable they should be suffered to enjoy the same favourable conditions, as he had thought proper to grant the rest of the inhabitants.

All the inhabitants of Damascus were therefore generally comprehended in the treaty which Obeidah had agreed to ; and public proclamation was made, that the inhabitants were at liberty to remain in Damascus, under protection of the Arabians, or to remove to any other place, if they thought fit to leave the city.

The

The Christians who chose to continue in their habitations, were allowed the free exercise of their religion, in consideration of tribute which they agreed to pay to the conquerors. But a great number of them resolved to follow Thomas their general, who designed to retire to Antioch with the principal inhabitants of Damascus.

ABUBECRE.

Hegyra 12.

Ch. ær. 633.

To which end Thomas applied for a passport, and as Khaled made difficulties in granting one so extensive as was required, the grecian general only desired they would grant him a safe conduct for three or four days, which he thought was full time to perform the march he was about to undertake. Khaled consented to it, but on condition only that the inhabitants should carry nothing with them save the necessary provisions for their journey.

Conditions
granted to
the Christians
who left Da-
mascus.

Obeidah was much more indulgent in the capitulation he had granted, in which it was expressly stipulated, that the citizens of Damascus might carry away their money and effects. Wherefore they again applied to that general, and begged he would interpose in their behalf with Khaled, that they might not be deprived of the advantage he had been pleased to grant them by the articles. Obeidah, whose compassionate temper made him feel even for the misfortunes of his enemies, at last persuaded Khaled to give up that point.

But at the same time there arose a new difficulty; the mahometan general, who had yielded

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 12.
Ch. ær. 633.

yielded with the greatest repugnance to any thing that might contribute to the ease or advantage of the Christians, insisted that they should be disarmed before they quitted the city. This resolution made it necessary to apply to him once more, which was also undertaken by the kind Obeidah, who represented to Khaled, that as they had already promised full safety to the men of Damascus, it was but reasonable to put them in a condition to fear nothing on the road, not only from the parties that scoured the country, but even from wild beasts, by whom they might be attacked on the way. After many scruples, arms were obtained for the grecians; but it was determined, that they should be provided only with one weapon; for example, he that had a sword, was to have neither bow nor lance; and he to whom a bow was given, had neither lance nor sword, and so on; which was the utmost they could obtain from the mussulman general.

The Christians begin their march, under the conduct of Thomas and Herbis.

These matters being thus settled, they made ready for their march. It was a moving spectacle to see the lords of Damascus followed by the chief men of the city, bidding adieu to that delightful place in which they had been brought up; and those magnificent palaces, wherein they formerly passed their lives in so much ease and pleasure. They had with them their wives and children, whose natural unfitnes for fatigue, was augmented by the many conveniences of life with which luxury and opulence had furnished them.

them. They were forced to undertake a wearisome journey through horrid deserts, pathless woods, and over steep mountains, uncertain of being provided with the most necessary things.

ABU BECRE
H. gyra 12.
Ch. ær. 633.

Thomas, son-in-law to the emperor Heraclius, put himself at the head of the wretched fugitives: Herbis, an officer of chief note, assisted him in the care and ordering of the march, and they took the best measures they could to secure the women and children, and also the baggage (of which they had prodigious quantity) from the incursions of the robbers who infested the whole country; and they posted several bodies of cavalry on all sides, to guard the unhappy band from any insult.

The animosity which Khaled had shewn against the inhabitants of Damascus, at the time he ratified the treaty which Obeidah had made with them, seemed to be heightened after their departure. He was vexed to think they had escaped out of his hands; and the grief he felt on that account, induced him to form a design worthy his cruelty and injustice, which was to pursue the miserable Christians, to destroy them all, and seize the riches they bore away with them.

Khaled formed
a design of
pursuing the
Christians.

However, as the observance of treaties is an article particularly enjoined by the law of Mahomet, he at first felt some scruples, but he soon found means to get over them. He had, indeed, promised that the inhabitants of Damascus should not be molested by his forces during their march; but at the same time his agreement

ABUBEKRE. agreement was to continue in force no more
Hegyra 12. than three days; during which time he ordered
Ch. ær. 633. four thousand chosen men to hold themselves in readiness to march day and night, in pursuit of the Christians, so soon as the three days should be elapsed.

During that interval, a great contest arose touching the corn which was found in Damascus: Khaled asserted that it belonged to the Mussulmen by right of conquest. On the other hand, such of the inhabitants as had made it their option to become tributaries, rather than depart with the others, represented, that it ought to be their property, more especially as it was so agreed by the capitulation. The mussulman general, who, with the greatest unwillingness, had granted the former articles, warmly disputed this. Vainly did Obeidah and several other arabian officers plead in behalf of the new tributaries; Khaled fell into a passion bordering on fury, and could not be appeased till they proposed to refer the matter to the Caliph's decision. The general consented, and forthwith dispatched a courier for Medina, to inform Abubecre of what had passed.

This altercation almost rendered abortive Khaled's design to pursue the Christians. They had been four days on their march, and it was to be presumed they had time enough to gain a place of refuge.

But Khaled reflecting on the difficulties of the road, the multitude of old men, women, and children, which were amongst those fugitives,
and

and that the bad weather which had hap- ABUBECRE.
pened since their departure might probably Hegyra 12.
have retarded their march, thought it was not Ch. ær. 633.
impossible but he might still come up with them.

He was, however, uncertain what to do ; Adventure of
but the earnest solicitations of a renegado a Christian
Christian at last induced him to put his project named Jonas,
in execution. The renegado was called
Jonas. He was a man of distinction, and
had espoused a young lady of a considerable
family in Damascus. The marriage being
concluded, the young lady's parents on a sud-
den changed their minds, and when Jonas
demanded his wife, to carry her to his habi-
tation, they refused giving her up to him, and
even forbid him their house. The Arabians
appearing at that time before the city, they
had no leisure to consider his claim. Jonas,
who did not lose sight of his design, took ad-
vantage of the confusion occasioned by the
siege, and obtained a private interview with
the young lady, in which they agreed to make
their escape from Damascus. They both ac-
tually prepared to depart during the night,
and by means of some pieces of money which
they gave to the soldiers on guard at the gate,
they got safe out of Damascus.

Jonas, who was foremost, was soon stop-
ped by some Arabians then going the rounds.
The young lady, who heard what passed, had
time to make her way back to the city gate, at
which they gave her admittance. Jonas hav-

ABUBEKRE:

Hegyra 12.

Ch. ær. 633.

ing been examined by the officer that stopped him, related his whole story. They flattered him with the hopes of soon seeing his wife again, for that in a short time the city must be taken; but they annexed to it, by way of condition, that he must immediately turn Mahometan, or they would put him to death.

This menace so greatly terrified the poor Christian, that he consented instantly to embrace Mahometism. And when once he had taken that first step, the rest came easy to him; he forgot at the same time both his religion and his country: he entered into the service of the Mahometans, and was even very forward and active in the siege, in hopes that by taking the city, he might regain the fair object of his wishes.

So soon as the Arabians entered Damascus, his first care was to enquire where that young lady resided; and having been informed that she had retired to a religious community, he went to wait on her, and after having expressed in the most lively terms the happiness he felt in the enjoyment of her presence, he told her the great risk he had run, and what resolution he had taken to avoid the deadly blow which would have parted them for ever.

The story of his apostacy wrought a sudden change in the mind of the fair Grecian. Her love for religion prevailing over her inclination for Jonas, she treated him with the utmost contempt,

contempt, and left him ; at the same time declaring she would never have the least connexions with a man, who had been so base as to abjure Christianity ; and, in short, when the inhabitants of Damascus had obtained permission to leave the city, she departed with the daughter of Heraclius, and the other ladies, to go to Antioch.

ABUBECRE.

Hegyra 12.

Ch. ær. 633.

Jonas, who had contracted a friendship with most of the mahometan officers, and especially with Khaled, earnestly pressed that general to interpose his authority, that the lady might be detained : but Khaled having had so many contests touching the capitulation in general, declined entering into any new disputes on a particular account, and absolutely refused to grant his request.

These solicitations therefore proving ineffectual, Jonas laid hold on the design Khaled had formed to pursue the Christians, and even offered to be his guide in that disastrous expedition. The mussulman general seeming (as has been observed) very cool upon the enterprize, Jonas, who with the greatest grief saw he had no other means left to recover his wife, if those failed, was so importunate with Khaled, that at last he prevailed on him to resume the project. Thus that wicked apostate, with a view to gratify his desires, made no scruple of becoming an instrument for delivering up into the cruel hands of the Arabians an infinite multitude of his fellow citizens, worn out with their

Jonas prevails
on Khaled to
pursue the
Christians.

ABÜBECKRE. sufferings during a long siege, and still more
 Hegyra 12. by the great difficulties and fatigue they had
 Ch. ær. 633. undergone in their march.

Khaled then resolved to execute his former design, moved thereto by the solicitations of that renegado. He departed at the head of four thousand chosen men, whom, by the advice of Jonas, he dressed in grecian habits, the better to deceive the fugitives, who might have found means of securing themselves, if they had heard that so considerable a body of arabian troops were in the field.

The mussulman general made a forced march, which soon enabled him to come up with the Christians. Besides, all things seemed to concur in making them wretched. Had they gone to Antioch, as they at first proposed, they might have reached that city before the Arabians could have overtaken them; but the emperor, being informed of their intentions, forthwith dispatched an express, with orders that they should come to Constantinople. That prince was justly apprehensive that the arrival of the inhabitants of Damascus at Antioch would throw the whole city into a consternation; and that the stories of the feats of the Arabians would spread terror amongst the citizens, and induce them to abandon the place.

These orders caused the destruction of all the unhappy Grecians whom Khaled was in pursuit of. They might, indeed, have easily reached Antioch, but the necessity which the emperor laid them under of performing so
 long

long a journey, made them fall at last into the hands of the Arabians; tho' not till several days after they had begun their march.

ABUBECRE.

Hegyra 12.

Ch. ær. 633.

The bye-ways they had taken to go for Constantinople, slackened a little the pursuit of the Mahometans; but as so large a multitude could go no where without leaving behind them vestiges of their passage, the Arabians found no difficulty in coming up with them: they discovered the Grecians in a plain, where they had halted to take a little refreshment.

On that day, so fatal to the inhabitants of Damascus, the sky was more serene, and the sun shone with greater lustre than it had done since they began their journey. The weather till then had been very tempestuous, and the very eve preceding their unhappy meeting with the Arabians, a heavy rain had fallen, which lasted far in the night.

The next day the sun breaking out, the weather promising to be very fair, they stopped in a pleasant meadow, where they proposed to enjoy a little repose, after having spread out great part of their baggage and cloaths in order to dry them.

Khaled seeing them from a-far in that posture, found he should meet with no great difficulty in mastering a multitude fatigued with travelling, and besides unprovided of proper arms to repel a vigorous attack. He forthwith formed his troops into four divisions. He put himself at the head of the first, and gave the command of the three others to his

Khaled overtakes the Christians, attacks and cuts them in pieces.

ABUBECRE. general officers, who were Derar, Rafi, and
 Hegyra 12. Abdarrahan.
 Ch. ær. 633.

As according to the disposition made by the general the four detachments were to attack successively, Khaled chose to lead on the first. He fell with great fury on the Christians; but he met with a stronger resistance than he expected. Thomas, who spied him at a distance, had made preparations to receive him, not as an actual enemy, for the Arabians being cloathed in grecian habits, (as hath been already said) he did not at first apprehend any danger from them; however, he had taken those measures against all events, and had put in order all such as were in a condition to defend themselves.

Thomas is
killed.

He soon found whom he had to deal with; he knew Khaled, and stood his attack with great bravery; but the commanders marching up with the other detachments, resistance no longer availed. The Arabians, who were well armed, made a terrible slaughter of the miserable Christians. Thomas was amongst the first of the slain. That general having received a wound which felled him, Abdarrahan cut off his head, and fixed it on the spear belonging to the standard of the cross which he had taken at Damascus; when he began to cry aloud; "Woe to you, Christian dogs, behold the head of your commander."

Herbis has
the same fate.

This horrid spectacle hastened the defeat of the Grecians. In a short time Herbis, who

who was one of their greatest generals, ARUBECRE.
 perished by the sword of the Mahometans; Hegyra 12.
 after which, the Christians ceased to defend Ch. ær. 633.
 themselves, and were butchered without be-
 ing able to make the least resistance.

During the heat of the action Jonas fought Jonas's wife
 also, but in a very different manner. Being kills herself.
 delighted to see the Greeks fully employed by
 the Arabians, he forced his way to the place
 whither the women had retired, and endea-
 voured only to make himself master of his
 wife, and found, and would have seized her,
 but the noble Christian defended herself with
 amazing resolution. At last he took her pri-
 soner, and the very moment he thought her
 absolutely in his power, she privately drew a
 knife, plunged it in her breast, and fell dead
 at his feet.

It is impossible to express the pangs which
 Jonas felt at the sight of so sad an event. In
 the height of his despair, he was on the point of
 putting an end to his own life; but he was
 prevented by the timely arrival of some of
 the mahometan generals. The representa-
 tions which were made to him by those offi-
 cers at last calmed his grief. They urged to
 him the doctrine of the prophet, for which that
 apostate had always expressed the utmost re-
 verence, and remonstrated, that the event
 which had fallen out having been ordained
 and written in the book of destiny before
 all time, the eternal decrees had directed that
 he should never live with that woman, and

ABUBECRE. had in store for him a more advantageous match.
 Hegyra 12.
 Ch. ar. 633.

The daughter
 of Heraclius
 is given to
 Jonas.

And indeed the widow of Thomas, daughter to the emperor Heraclius, was on the point of being yielded up to the renegado, to make him amends for the loss of his wife. Rasi, one of the mussulman generals, in whose hands that princess fell, made a present of her to the wretch: he had the confidence to take her, without once considering that the lady's father had been his sovereign. Khaled himself also consented to the shameful bargain, but on condition, nevertheless, that Jonas should not become master of her person, unless the emperor should refuse to redeem her.

Khaled re-
 turns to Da-
 mascus.

That general made no delay to begin his march back to Damascus: he justly feared the consequences that might result from his expedition. He wisely concluded it could not have passed so secretly, but the news might have reached the grecian court. He had cause to suspect that the emperor might be informed of the small number of his troops, and consequently take speedy measures to cut off his retreat from that city, and amply to revenge himself for the cruelty with which he had treated its inhabitants.

Khaled therefore departed without delay, carrying with him the few prisoners who had escaped the slaughter, and also the baggage and other booty he had taken in that expedition. Whilst he was on the march, intelligence was brought that a great cloud of dust was seen
 to

to arise, which seemed to denote the arrival of a considerable body of troops. The Mussulman was at first a little uneasy at the news; but his fears were soon over at the account given him by a party of horse, whom he had sent out to reconnoitre.

ABU BECRE.
Hegyra 12.
Ch. ær. 633.

They told him it was a bishop, accompanied by a numerous train of Christians, who was come to demand an audience of him. Khaled having commanded a halt, the bishop accosted him, and in the emperor's name requested he would set at liberty the widow of general Thomas, the emperor's daughter. The Mussulman made no difficulty in complying; but at the same time spoke to the bishop in the following terms: "Tell your master there will never be peace between him and me, and if I now release his daughter, it is in hopes that ere long I shall make even him my prisoner."

The emperor demands his daughter's liberty, and obtains it.

After having received this answer, the bishop retired, and Khaled continued his march to Damascus, where his arrival greatly rejoiced the troops he had left behind. They began to be uneasy for his safety, and for the most part were apprehensive that the rash courage of that general had brought on his own destruction, as well as the loss of the whole detachment.

Immediately after his arrival he distributed the whole booty he had taken from the fugitives. It was divided into five parts, four whereof were given to the officers and soldiers, and

They share the booty.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 12.
Ch. ær. 633.

and the remainder was reserved to be laid up in the public treasury. Khaled sent it away to the Caliph with a letter, in which he gave him a full account of all that had passed since the taking of Damascus: in particular he desired to know what resolution had been taken touching the contests which had happened between him and Obeidah, and concluded his letter with a narrative of his expedition against the Christians who had quitted the city of Damascus.

Death of the
Caliph Abu-
becre.

Abubecre did not receive either that letter, or the other, in which his opinion had been asked touching the grain found in Damascus. He did not even hear the news of the taking that place, for he died the very day Khaled took possession of it. Arabian authors differ in their accounts of that Caliph's death. some assert he was poisoned by the Jews; others say, that having bathed one day when the weather happened to be excessively cold, he was seized with a fever, which brought him to the grave in a fortnight's time. This is the account given of his death by his daughter Aiesha, in the traditions which go under her name.

Abubecre
appoints
Omar for his
successor.

When Abubecre fell sick, he directed Omar to repeat the public prayers in his stead; and as he grew worse, he called for his secretary, and dictated to him the following will.

“ In the name of the most merciful God, I, Abubecre-ebn-abi-Cohafa, being ready to depart from this world to the next, do make my will, at that moment when infidels believe, when the wicked no longer doubt, and when liars speak

speak the truth. I nominate Omar-ebn-al-
 Khetab to be my successor from the good opi-
 nion I have of his integrity. I think he will
 rule according to justice; if he doth otherwise,
 he will receive according to his works. I have
 acted for the best, but I cannot dive into
 mens secret thoughts. Finally, such as do evil
 will surely be punished for their mis-deeds.
 Act uprightly, and may the blessing of God
 be upon you."

ABUBECRE.
 Hegyra 12.
 Ch. ær. 633.

Omar heard with great indifference of what
 the Caliph had done in his favour; not that
 he wanted a due sense of Abubecre's friend-
 ship, and the trust he reposed in him, but
 being easy and happy in leading a private life,
 he had no ambition for eminent posts or digni-
 ties, which are ever attended with pains and per-
 plexities. He had a very long conference on
 that subject with the Caliph, and used his ut-
 most endeavours to make him alter his mind,
 desiring him particularly to consider, that ac-
 cording to his way of thinking, honours would
 in no wise contribute to his quiet.

Omar refuses
 the Caliph-
 ship.

Abubecre very kindly answered, that the
 dignity in question stood in need of such a
 person as he to possess it; that it was a gift
 which he ought not to consider solely as a
 testimony of his friendship, but as the strong-
 est proof he could give of his zeal and
 love for the people. Omar could not hold
 out any longer, but complied with what the
 Caliph had resolved on. The rest of the confe-
 rence Abubecre employed in giving him such
 instructions

Abubecre
 prevails on
 him to accept
 it.

ABUBECRE. instructions as he thought proper for the government of the state.
 Hegyra 12.
 Ch. ær. 633.

Abubecre's
 prayer.

So soon as the conference was over, Omar retired; and Abubecre forthwith lifting his hands and eyes towards heaven, began to pray with great fervency. "Oh God!" cried he, "thou knowest I have nought in view but the good of the people; grant that Omar may be a good prince; spread abroad the doctrine of the prophet during his reign; but may it be thy will at the same time to make the professors thereof upright men." He died in a short time, and was greatly lamented by all his subjects. His reign lasted but two years *, three months, and nine days.

His character.

Such was the end of the first Caliph of the Arabians; a prince truly valuable for his chastity, temperance, modesty and frugality. During his whole life, he shewed an admirable indifference for riches, honours, and all that constitute the happiness of mankind in this world. He was not dazzled even with the glitter of a diadem; and it has appeared, that love for the public good, and a desire to preserve the tranquillity of the state, were the sole motives for his ascending the throne, which he was ever ready to quit, the moment the happiness of Arabia required it.

He commanded his daughter Aiesha to give to the poor all he had gained during the time

* It must be observed that those were lunar years, and consequently twenty-two days shorter than ours.

he had been Caliph. He was always ready to succour the distressed, and especially persons of merit who were indigent. Every week he made a distribution of the money which he found in the public treasury; part of it he gave to his soldiery, the rest he bestowed on the poor and needy, especially such as had merit. That distribution was made on each Friday night. He seldom kept any money for himself, being content with the estate derived to him from his ancestors: he lived on this income of his patrimony, insomuch that during the two years he reigned, he took only three drachmas out of the treasury, which he looked on to be a reward, he said, for all his services.

ABUBECRE.
Hegyra 12.
Ch. ær. 633.

It is related on that occasion that Omar, hearing the great commendations which were bestowed on the extraordinary disinterestedness of Abubecre, was wont to say, that the Caliph had left his successors a very difficult pattern to follow.

Such arabian historians as have given us a picture of that great man, have described him as being tall and well made, but a little inclinable to be lean, of a very florid complexion, and his beard a little thin, which he used to paint and dye after the manner of the orientals.

Some affirm it was he that collected into one volume the several chapters of the Alcoran, which in the days of Mahomet were in loose sheets; and which volume was given in charge to Hafsah, daughter of Omar, and one of the prophet's wives.

O M A R.

The SECOND CALIPH.

OMAR.

Hegyra 13.
Ch. ær. 634.Omar is ac-
knowledged
Caliph.

OMAR was acknowledged Caliph without the least opposition. The precaution Abubecre had taken to nominate him for his successor, prevented all disturbances that otherwise might have arisen; insomuch that Ali, who in some measure laid claim to that dignity at the time the first Caliph was elected, did not make the least opposition to the promotion of the present.

They gave him at first the title of Caliph of the Caliph of the apostle of God, that is to say, successor to the successor of Mahomet. But Omar having represented in the assembly of the Mussulmen, that in the sequel the word Caliph would be repeated ad infinitum *, in a course of succession, Mogairah-ebn-Schaad rose up, and proposed an expedient to avoid the inconvenience in question. “My lord,” said he to him, “you are our Emir;” (that is to say commander) “and we are all, through God’s mercy, Moumenins;” (that is to say faithful) “receive

* The Arabians seem to have been puzzled by a trifle; for if instead of a repetition of the words Caliph of the Caliph, or successor of the successor, and so ad infinitum, they had made use of the numerical order as we do, the mighty difficulty would have vanished.

therefore

therefore the title we give you of Emir-al-Moumenin." The whole assembly applauded Mogairah's proposal, and Omar was the first Caliph distinguished by the title of commander of the faithful, which also was assumed by his successor.

OMAR.
Hegyra 13.
Ch. ær. 634.

So soon as Omar was acknowledged sovereign, he went to the mosque, where he mounted the pulpit and harangued the people. He gave them to understand, that he had been induced to take charge of the government only from a thorough persuasion of their submission, their obedience, their love for their country, and, above all, their zeal for Mahometism. He concluded with giving them some moral instructions, and so the ceremony of his inauguration ended.

The new Caliph finding himself at the head of the state, took such measures as he thought the most conducive both to the good of the subject, and advancement of religion.

The letter which brought an account of the taking of Damascus not arriving at Medina till some time after Abubecre's death, was delivered to Omar; and so soon as he had perused it, he formed a resolution of taking the chief command from Khaled, and giving it to Obeidah. That change was not effected without opposition from the Mussulmen. Khaled had a strong party at Medina, who looked upon him to be the greatest general of the nation; insomuch that Omar had no sooner

Omar gives
the command
in chief to
Obeidah.

OMAR.
Hegyra 13.
Ch. ær. 634.

fooner declared his intentions to the assembly, than a murmur was heard, which plainly shewed they were not all of the Caliph's opinion.

A young Mussulman undertaking to speak in the name of Khaled's friends, strongly represented that this general had been the instrument heaven was pleased to make use of to extend the conquests of the nation, and to propagate religion ; and therefore they could not deprive him of the command without being accountable to God himself, for the injury such a change would certainly do to the state in general, and to Mahometism in particular.

These remonstrances, which were well founded, made some impression upon the Caliph, but did not prevent him from executing his design. He alledged no other reason for his resolution, than that Obeidah was of a mild disposition, and compassionate to the soldiers : that Khaled, on the contrary, was a hot man, ruled by his furious temper, who lavished the lives of the troops, and whose successes were rather owing to his good fortune than his prudence.

Omar therefore pursued his purpose ; he answered the letter which brought the news of the taking of Damascus, and directed his answer to Obeidah, whom he informed at the same time of the death of Abubecre, his being appointed Caliph, and the choice he made

made of that officer to be commander in chief in the room of Khaled.

OMAR.
Hegyra 13.
Ch. ær. 634.

Obeidah received the letter at the very time Khaled was pursuing the inhabitants of Damascus. He was greatly surprized at the information it contained, and still more at his promotion to the command of the army. His natural modesty and want of ambition rendered him very indifferent to high posts and eminent dignities; and besides, he felt the utmost reluctance to dispossess Khaled of his employment. He was therefore at a loss what use to make of the letter he had received. But as the general's absence afforded him time for reflection, he resolved to keep to himself the contents of the Caliph's letter; insomuch that when Khaled returned, Obeidah suffered him to write again to Medina, to give an account of his last exploit; and as his troops had not the least knowledge of the change that had happened in the Caliphship, the letter was directed to Abubecre.

Obeidah's
perplexity on
his being pro-
moted.

The dispatch having been delivered to Omar, he was astonished to find they were still strangers in Syria to the alteration which had happened in the state. Besides Obeidah's silence seemed to him a greater mystery, as by availing himself of that letter by which he was declared commander in chief, he might easily have put an end to the disputes he had with Khaled, and on which the latter begged his directions.

OMAR.

Hegyra 13.
Ch. ær. 634.The new
Caliph in-
forms the
army of his
advancement.

Omar immediately returned an answer, which he again directed to Obeidah. But lest that general either thro' modesty, or for any other cause, should conceal the second letter as well as the first, he gave orders to an officer of distinction, named Schaddad-ebn-Aus, to carry it to Damascus, to read it in presence of the Mussulmen, and then to proclaim him Caliph at the head of the troops.

Schaddad arriving soon at Damascus, waited on Khaled, whom he informed of Abubecre's death, and Omar's election. He then told him he had brought a letter from the new Caliph directed to Obeidah; but that he was commanded to read it in presence of all the faithful. Khaled, who knew he was no favourite with Omar, easily foresaw that as the letter was not directed to him, it must contain orders to his prejudice; and he soon learned his fate even from the Caliph's envoy, who made no secret of the change which personally concerned him.

Grief of the
army for the
death of Abu-
becre.

When the letter was read, the assembly seemed to disregard all the contents, save only what related to the death of Abubecre, whose loss filled the army with affliction. In truth that Caliph had been always greatly loved and esteemed by his subjects, and it was manifest that he looked on them all as his children; wherefore he was lamented by all the Mussulmen as if each of them had lost a father.

In respect to Khaled he never appeared so great, so noble, thro' his gallant exploits and military talents, as on account of his behaviour on this occasion. He must have felt an inward satisfaction to see the grief shewn by a great number of his officers and soldiers at his being put out of the command; but for his part, he demeaned himself with signal modesty and moderation, and paid an implicit obedience to the Caliph's orders.

OMAR.
Hegyra 13.
Ch. ær. 634.
Khaled receives the news of his removal with great submission.

He caused him to be proclaimed at Damascus, and immediately after the ceremony, he resigned the command to Obeidah. The new general was extremely perplexed in this juncture. He was sensible how greatly such a general as Khaled would contribute to the success of his undertakings, and he was justly apprehensive that the brave Mussulman, exasperated to find himself laid aside in the career of his conquests, might be disgusted with the service, and quit the army; but Khaled soon removed his fears.

"I well knew," said he, "that Omar did not love me; but he is our Caliph, and I submit to his commands. It shall not be said my zeal is slackened, and I will prove it on every occasion in which he shall think fit to employ me."

A submission so worthy admiration, and which could proceed only from a soul truly great, gained Khaled as much honour as a victory could have procured him. Obei-

OMAR.
Hegyra 13.
Ch. ær. 634.

dah, on his part, being sensible of the great advantages which would result from so heroic an example, renewed his esteem for the general, and thought he could not better place his confidence than in a man who shewed such exalted sentiments.

The Arabians march to attack a monastery, where a great fair was held.

So soon as Obeidah had taken on him the command of the army, he turned his thoughts to the making conquests. He was considering which way he should bend his force, when a Christian, who carried on a correspondence with the Arabians, came and informed him, that a fair opportunity offered of taking a very valuable booty from the Greeks. He told him, that a few leagues from Damascus was a famous monastery called Dair Abil Kodos, or the monastery of the holy father, which stood between Tripoli and Harran, where on Easter day (so solemnly kept by the Christians) a great fair was annually held, to which was brought immense riches, consisting of merchandize of all kinds; and that he might so much the more easily make himself master of them, as the Grecians scarce ever kept any guard there, or if they did, it was a very weak one.

Obeidah forthwith resolved to send out a detachment on that expedition, and asked of several officers then present, which of them would take upon him the command. He at the same time cast a look on Khaled, who was amongst them, but he dared not ask him to march.

march. Khaled on his part was not forward in offering his service; and Abdallah-ebn-Giafar having agreed to undertake it, the general gave him his orders, and put under his command five hundred horse. The Christian who proposed the enterprize, filled the measure of his treachery by offering to guide the detachment. He conducted them to a little distance from the monastery, and bid Abdallah refresh his troops, whilst he should go and reconnoitre what passed thereabouts.

OMAR.

Hegyra 13.
Ch. ær. 634.

But things turned out quite contrary to his expectations. The fair had never before been so crouded; and the concourse was much encreased by the arrival of the governor of Tripoli and his daughter, who had been lately married to a lord of the greatest rank. He was accompanied by a very numerous retinue, and it was reckoned he had with him near five thousand men well armed.

In the monastery dwelt an antient monk, highly esteemed for the sanctity and austerity of his life. He had gained so great a reputation, that people flocked to him from all parts to implore the assistance of his prayers, and not a marriage of any consequence was had, but the new-married couple came to beg his blessing; to which end, the governor came there with his daughter and son-in-law.

The Christian having viewed the posture of affairs, returned to make his report to

OMAR.
Hegyra 13.
Ch. ær. 634.

Abdallah, and was the first to say that no attempt could safely be made on so great a number of people. The Mahometan officers were of the same opinion, and told their commander, they thought it was the best way to return; but Abdallah replied with an air of intrepidity, “For my own part, I will not return without fighting: then follow me who will, and as to the rest I shall not be displeased with them.”

The Arabians being encouraged by these words, assured their commander they were ready to follow him, and share both the glory and danger of the event. The Christian finding the attack was resolved on, advised Abdallah to defer it till the next day, when all the merchandize would be exhibited.

Abdallah followed the Christian’s advice, and passed the intervening time in making the necessary preparations for succeeding in his enterprize. He divided his men into four companies, and charged them not to think of pillage, but to be vigilant in putting to the sword all such as appeared before them.

The next morning Abdallah having given the signal, his troops in five different places fell on all such as were present at the fair. For a time there was a horrid slaughter, during which the Arabians met with no resistance; but the soldiers who accompanied the governor having been drawn up, marched in order of battle against the Arabians, and were preparing to surround them.

A mahometan officer, called Abdollah-
ebn-Anis, observing they were about to make
that motion, foresaw the whole detachment
would be cut in pieces, if it was not speedily
succoured. He therefore rode off with great
precipitation, and informed Obeidah of the
extremity to which his men were reduced.

OMAR.
Hegyra 13.
Ch. ær. 634.

As there was no time to be lost, Obeidah
thought he could do nothing better than ap-
ply himself to Khaled: "In God's name,"
said he to him, "do not fail me in this exi-
gency, but go and relieve our brethren."
Khaled immediately obeyed. He took with
him Derar, and some other officers of known
bravery, and being accompanied by a de-
tachment of chosen horse, he marched with
the utmost expedition to the place where the
encounter was.

Khaled
marches to
relieve the
Arabians, and
defeats the
troops which
defended the
monastery.

He arrived very opportunely; the Ara-
bians, fatigued and quite dejected by a long
combat, were on the point of yielding, when
Khaled falling on the Greeks with his accus-
tomed impetuosity, broke through the ring
they had formed round the Mussulmen, and
at last joined them. His presence had a
surprizing effect: the Arabians seemed in-
spired with fresh courage, and being seconded
by the troops which Khaled had brought
with him, they forced the Grecians to give
way, and put them to the rout. A great
number of Christians were slain on the spot,
and amongst others the governor of Tripoli,
who fell by the hand of Derar.

OMAR.

Hegyra 13.
Ch. ær. 634.The Arabians
take possession
of the mo-
nastery.

The action being over, they took possession of the monastery, wherein they found immense booty in money and rich merchandizes, which were brought thither on account of the fair. The number of their prisoners was also very considerable. Amongst others they took the young bride, and forty women, her attendants, whom Khaled sent to Damascus. But ere he departed, he caused them to bring before him the venerable monk, the oracle of Syria, whose prayers (as has been before observed) were held in great esteem. Khaled was desirous of asking him some questions; but instead of answering them, the old man took the liberty to reproach him for his cruelty, and to threaten him with the vengeance of heaven. “Why should I fear it?” replied Khaled, “since God commanded his prophet to make war against the Christians. And I should not have spared you any more than the rest, if the apostle of God had not commanded us to do no hurt to men of your profession.” After this short conference Khaled dismissed the monk, and gave him leave to dwell in the monastery.

They divide
the booty
taken from
the Christi-
ans.

The Arabians returned forthwith to Damascus, loaded with the riches they had taken from the Greeks. It was divided amongst the soldiers, after the fifth part had been deducted for the public treasury. The prisoners were also shared, and Abdallah having requested that the daughter of the governor

governor of Tripoli might be allotted to him, it was granted, but not till the Caliph's consent was thereto obtained.

OMAR.

Hegyra 13.
Ch. ær. 634.

A particular account of this transaction was directly sent to Medina. Obeidah was not sparing in his commendations of Abdallah, who began the enterprize; nor of Khaled, to whose activity they were indebted for its success. He widely expatiated on the great obligations they had to the latter, and even begged of the Caliph that he would write to him in particular, and let him know he was well pleased with his conduct. He also desired he would give directions what measures he should take with several Mussulmen who had broken the prophet's law, by drinking wine*. He concluded his

Obeidah's
letter to the
Caliph.

* Mahomet's followers are forbid the use of wine. "They will ask thee concerning wine, and the games of chance," said God to Mahomet in the Alcoran. "Tell them there is great sin in the one, and in the other." And in another part of the same book, "O you that believe, surely wine, games of chance, images, and the arrows of fortune, are an abomination of the works of Satan; therefore avoid them, that ye may prosper."

Some interpreters, however, have strove to mitigate the rigour of this prohibition, saying, the excess of them was only forbidden. On that account they cite this other passage of the Alcoran, by which wine seems to be allowed of: "And of the fruits of palm-trees and grapes ye obtain an inebriating liquor, and also good nourishment:" Verily herein is a sign unto people who understand.

It is pretended that Mahomet prohibited the use of wine, only because it had like to have killed him at an entertainment the Jews gave him, where the company drank to excess. Others attribute it to a reason founded on policy, which forbids the use of wine and games of chance, as the common source of all quarrels.

Gagnier's life of Mahomet, vol. II. book 3.

letter

OMAR.
Hegyra 13.
Ch. ær. 634.

letter with consulting him on the future operations of the campaign, and desired to be informed whether he should undertake the conquest of Antioch, or that of Jerusalem.

The Caliph's
answer to the
letter.

The Caliph answered every article of the letter, except that relating to Khaled. Nothing could prevail on him to entertain a favourable opinion of that officer; of whom, however, it does not appear he had any just cause of complaint. In respect to the breach of the law, Omar directed that such as drank wine should be punished by receiving twenty bastinadoes each on the soles of their feet. This order was put in execution, and there were even some amongst them, who, without being charged, accused themselves through zeal to religion, and readily submitted to that severe punishment. As to the operations of war, the Caliph declined giving the general any plan, but left him at liberty to carry his arms whithersoever he thought best.

Obeidah forthwith called a council of war, and it was there resolved, that the army should march with all speed to Aleppo, and afterwards form the siege of Antioch. He afterwards appointed Kkaled to command a large detachment, with which he ordered that officer to march before him. He followed him in a few days, and left in Damascus a garrison of five hundred horse. When he had joined Khaled, he sent him

him out to ravage the territories of Emessa and Kennefrin, whilst he should go and attack Baalbeck, a city formerly known by the name of Heliopolis.

But as he was on the march, a courier brought him from the Caliph an order to begin his conquests by taking the city of Emessa. The reasons which induced Omar to form that resolution, were contained in the letter he sent to Obeidah. After the usual introduction, "In the name of God most merciful," &c. it went on as follows:

"Giabalah-ebn-Aihan, of the tribe of Gassan, coming some time ago to visit us, together with his kinsfolk and other chiefs of his tribe, I gave them a kind reception, and they went with us the pilgrimage to Mecca, where they performed all the usual ceremonies, going seven times round the temple. Fezerah, who was behind him, accidentally trod on his garment, which he caused to fall off his shoulders: he protested at the same time that he was sorely grieved thereat, and had not designedly done the deed. But Giabalah, not heeding his excuse, smote him so violently on the face, that he broke his nose, and beat out four of his teeth. Fezerah immediately came before me. I heard his complaint; and in consequence thereof, having caused Giabalah also to appear, I asked him why he ill-treated a Mussulman, who had justified himself to him. He answered, that had it not been

OMAR.

Hegyra 13.

Ch. ær. 634.

The Caliph orders siege to be laid to Emessa.

OMAR.
Hegyra 13.
Ch. ær. 634.

been for the respect he bore to the temple, he would have killed Fezerah, for having shewed the nakedness of his shoulders, by treading on his vestment. You condemn yourself out of your own mouth, answered I; and unless the injured person will pardon you, I must punish you according to the *lex talionis**. Consider I am a king, replied he, and the other but a base peasant. That matters not, said I, before the God men adore there is no respect of persons. He intreated, that I would defer the punishment till the next day, and I had even gained the consent of the party wronged, but in the night-time Giabalah and his friends made their escape, and I hear they have taken refuge in Emessa. Go, therefore, without delay, and besiege the city, that he may be punished for so heinous a breach of his duty."

The Arabians
take the city
Emessa on
terms.

Obeidah therefore immediately began his march for Emessa, and ordered Khaled (who was gone to lay waste the adjacent country) to begin the siege of that place. All circumstances fell out as favourably as could be wished. Upon a report which was spread that the Arabians were going to attack Baalbeck, the inhabitants of Emessa had neglected to provide for the defence of the city, and were far from expecting so sudden a visit from

* Mahomet hath adopted the *lex talionis*, by which a person was condemned to suffer the same punishment he inflicted on another.

the enemy. Besides, the governor of the place died the very day Khaled sat down before the walls, and they had no person fit to succeed him on so important an occasion. But they made a motion, which saved the town from the impending danger; instead of thinking of a defence, they had recourse to negotiation, and the expedient succeeded.

OMAR.
Hegyra 13.
Ch. ær. 634.

It is highly probable that Giabalah advised them to treat; and indeed he was more concerned than any other person, to prevent the enemy from taking the city by storm. The knowledge he had of Obeidah's humane and gentle disposition, might give him hopes he would consent to an accommodation, and it is likely that he induced the inhabitants to demand a conference with that general.

Happily for them, he arrived in a short time after Khaled; for if the latter had been left a few days more to himself, the city would have been undone. The fierceness of that captain made him an enemy to negotiations. Obeidah therefore received the deputies of Emessa; he kindly listened to their proposals, and as they offered to pay a large tribute, he consented to grant them a suspension of arms for a year.

That general gave a new proof of his humanity, in an event which happened about the same time. A mussulman officer having been sent out to scour the country for

Instance of
Obeidah's
humanity.

OMAR.
Hegyra 13.
Ch.ær. 634.

for intelligence, returned with an immense booty, as well in cattle and money, as prisoners, whose number amounted to about four hundred. The groans which were uttered by the wretched captives when they entered the arabian camp, made such an impression on the tender-hearted Obeidah, that he resolved to set them at liberty : but that he might not take the whole on himself, he consulted his chief officers : and they, finding their general would be pleased if they should incline to the side of mercy, were of opinion the prisoners should be released, on payment of a tribute of four pieces of gold, which they engaged to pay for each head. After proper security was taken for the payment thereof, Obeidah suffered the prisoners to depart, and even caused what had been taken from them to be restored.

Obeidah's
mildness in-
duces several
towns to sur-
render.

This instance of goodness more highly promoted the success of the mahometan affairs, than the most rigorous conduct could have done. Khaled's cruelty had made the Mussulmen odious, which conduct had probably given the Caliph an aversion to him. Obeidah, on the contrary, gained the affections of all men by his mildness and moderation. Many cities even came voluntarily, and submitted to the mahometan government ; and they thought themselves happy, that on payment of a tribute they could secure their liberty, and maintain the free exercise of their religion.

These

These new tributaries were of infinite use to the Mussulmen, and often assisted them with their councils how to betray the Christians. Such was the success of the gentle dealings, the prudence, or, if you will, the policy of Obeidah, whose plan was to preserve and win over to his interest the inhabitants of all the conquered places.

OMAR.
Hegyra. 13.
Ch. ær. 634.

Kennefrin, a city of Syria, situate at a little distance from Aleppo, was one of those which surrendered on terms of composition to the Arabians. The place was strongly fortified, and in a condition of making a long defence; but the inhabitants, whose minds were set on their commerce, chose rather to secure themselves from the inroads of the Arabians by a treaty, than by force of arms. The governor was not of that opinion: however, as he found the citizens were resolved to take such measures, he conformed to their sentiments, and sent to demand a truce of the enemy; but he stipulated that it should last no longer than till the arrival of the succours which the emperor had promised to send them.

The governor of Kennefrin proposes a truce to him.

Astackhar, a grecian priest, who was a man of great learning, and spoke the arabian tongue very fluently, was appointed to execute that commission. He went therefore to Emessa to wait upon Obeidah, and after having exaggerated the number of the forces in Kennefrin, and the bravery of the governor, he told him, that officer demanded
a truce

OMAR.
Hegyra 13.
Ch. ær. 634.

a truce for a year, and desired at the same time bounds might be fixed, which the Arabians should not be permitted to pass, in order to enter the territory belonging to the city. He added, that the commandant desired his demand should be privately discussed, that he might avoid incurring the indignation of the emperor, who had promised him a speedy succour.

Khaled's representations on that account.

Obeidah, who received the envoy with his usual goodness, was inclined to grant his request without restriction: But Khaled highly offended at the deputy's boasts touching the forces in the city, and the bravery of the governor, represented to Obeidah, that he ought to distrust the Christians; that their aim was only to amuse and deceive him, till they were sure of getting the better; that the only proper way was to march against them forthwith, and as to the great resistance they vaunted themselves able to make, he doubted not but he could prove the contrary; and that spight of the valour of their veterans, and the consummate courage of their commandant, he would engage to be soon master of the place, of which he would make such an example, as should terrify all that dared even to think of resisting.

Heg. 14.
Ch. ær. 635.

The deputy surprized at Khaled's inhumanity, reproached him for it: "I came to you," said he, "to demand a peace, and you refuse the terms I offer. We have therefore

therefore been imposed on by such as have told us, that the Arabians were full of mercy to those who sued for their protection.”

OMAR.

Hegyra 14.

Ch. ær. 635.

Khaled hastily answered, “ That he detested men of artifice and deceit.” He would have said more, but Obeidah interrupted, and with great good-nature represented to him, that as he was inclined to favour such as implored his clemency, it was right to give their deputy a satisfactory answer, especially as it might be done without hurting the interest of the Mussulmen.

After having conferred together some time, it was at last agreed to give a truce for a year to the inhabitants of Kennefrin. They also promised to spare their territory, in consequence of the boundaries which were forthwith erected ; but it was stipulated, that if the emperor sent out forces against the Arabians, the inhabitants should not join them, but remain within the walls of the city, without undertaking the least enterprize against the Mussulmen.

A truce is granted to the inhabitants of Kennefrin.

These conditions having been accepted, nothing remained but to fix the boundary. The inhabitants, instead of marking out the limits by a bank, erected a pedestal, on which they placed a statue of the emperor sitting on his throne.

This statue had like to have caused a quarrel between the inhabitants and the Arabians : two mahometan horsemen passing

An incident had almost occasioned a breach of the truce.

OMAR.
Hegyra 14.
Ch. ær. 635.

ing that way, stopped upon the borders of Kennefrin, where they tilted with their lances ; and one of them, either accidentally or otherwise, struck the statue in the eye and defaced it. The Grecians made a great noise about this matter. They affirmed it was an insult levelled at the emperor himself ; and in short they sent deputies to Obeidah, to demand satisfaction for the affront.

The prudent Mussulman was pleased to make excuse for what had happened. He assured them he had made a strict enquiry about it, and that the person who struck the statue solemnly declared he had done it by mere accident.

The great temper with which Obeidah answered the deputies, made them insolent : they talked in higher terms than before ; insomuch that Obeidah having offered to give them proper satisfaction, they insolently and seriously required that the *lex talionis* should be put in force, and the Caliph have one of his eyes put out.

This ridiculous proposal so enraged the Arabians, that the deputies would have fallen victims to their fury, had not Obeidah taken care to appease them. But he, with great presence of mind, turned their extravagant demand into a jest ; and agreeing with them that it was reasonable to put the *lex talionis* in execution, he advised them for that purpose to provide a statue of the Caliph, and to mutilate it in one of the eyes in like man-

ner

ner as the emperor's had been served. The deputies returned with that answer, and the affair went no farther.

OMAR.

Hegyra 14.
Ch. ær. 635.

During the time Obeidah was encamped before Emessa, the Caliph, who had lately received no news of any military atchievements, wrote to that general, and complained of his silence and inactivity. Obeidah was touched to the quick by these reproaches, and was vexed that he had so readily granted a suspension of arms to the Grecians. But as he was unwilling to fail of his engagements, he did not disturb the inhabitants of Emessa, or the other places with whom he had treated, and he turned his force another way. However, the general left a strong detachment near Emessa, to keep the place in awe during the truce.

Obeidah is reproached for his inactivity.

The mussulman army therefore began their march, which they bent towards Aleppo; they passed by Arrestan, whence they went to Hamah, a place which was afterwards the residence of the famous Abulfeda, who, at the same time he was a prince, was also a famous author, both in history and geography.

When they left Hamah, they took the road to Schaizar; where Obeidah halted, having received intelligence that the governor of Kennefrin had earnestly pressed the emperor to send him succours, and that he was about to send forthwith a considerable body of troops under the command of Giabalah. This was the same person, on whose account

The governor of Kennefrin breaks the truce.

OMAR. the Caliph had ordered them to besiege
 Hegyra 14. Emessa, to which place he had fled : he after-
 Ch. ær. 635. wards went to the emperor, and offered him
 his service against the Mahometans.

The governor is killed at the head of a detachment. Obeidah having been informed at the same time that the governor of Kennefrin was preparing to march out in order to join that detachment, he resolved no longer to spare a man who in so barefaced a manner had broke the truce which had been granted him. He therefore ordered Khaled to march forth and prevent him. The brave Khaled effectually performed his orders; having come up with the governor on his march, he attacked him, routed his troops, and killed him with his own hand.

The inhabitants of Kennefrin yield to become tributaries. The death of that officer determined the fate of Kennefrin : the inhabitants no longer resisted, but submitted to the Arabians, and consented to become tributaries. Obeidah having sent the news to the Caliph, Omar wrote him a congratulatory letter on that account; and at the same time directed, that over and above the tribute, they should demand four ducats for each of the inhabitants without distinction.

Obeidah plunders a caravan. After this conquest, Khaled was commanded to go and attack Emessa with part of the army. Obeidah, with the remainder of the troops marched towards Baalbec, to form the siege of that place. In his way he met a caravan, of which he made himself master. The merchants that composed it having requested the general's leave to ransom themselves, he consented, and having received for that

that purpose considerable sums of money, he set them at liberty.

OMAR.
Hegyra 14.
Ch. ær. 635.

Some of these merchants having taken shelter in Baalbec, informed the governor of the accident which had befallen the caravan. As it was known in the place that the mussulman troops were divided, Herbis, (for so the governor was called) thought himself strong enough to attack the body commanded by Obeidah. He resolved therefore to lose no time, in hopes he might recover the great booty which had been taken from the caravan: but the event was far from answering his wishes; he was totally defeated, great part of his troops was cut in pieces, and the residue dispersed; and it was with much difficulty he got off himself, after having received several considerable wounds.

Obeidah pursuing his advantage, laid siege to Baalbec. But before he commenced his attacks, he wrote to the inhabitants, and persuaded them to surrender on terms. He was in hopes the event of the late action would have made an impression upon their minds, and that seeing a formidable enemy before their walls, they would readily enter into a treaty of accommodation: however, the besieged shewed another temper than Obeidah expected, and tho' they perused his letter, yet the governor dismissed the messenger without the least answer.

This insulting behaviour enraged the arabian general, and he resolved to be revenged by attacking the place with all possible vigour.

OMAR.
Hegyra 14.
Ch. ær. 635.

The Mussulmen underwent great hardships in this siege. As the weather was then extremely sharp, it was the more sensibly felt by troops which were encamped under tents, and who, besides, were unprovided of proper necessaries to secure them from the cold. Notwithstanding which they carried on the works with surprizing ardour, and the besieged, on their part, so couragiously defended themselves, as to baffle the first efforts of the assailants.

The besieged
sally out with
success.

The governor having been soon cured of the wounds he received in the encounter with the Arabians before their arrival at Baalbec, resolved to attempt a sally: he depended upon making it with the greatest success, as the mussulman general, who had but part of his troops with him, had divided them into several bodies, with intent to weaken the strength of the besieged, by obliging them also to divide the garrison.

Herbis having observed this disposition of the mahometan troops, proposed to attack only one of those bodies, and to sally from the gate which was over against Obeidah's quarters. He fixed the day for his enterprize; in the morning of which he made his sally at the very time the Mussulmen, by the general's order, were preparing their breakfast. Obeidah, who probably had some design to execute on that day, had given out orders that immediately after morning prayer his men should all take some refreshment.

This

This sally was fatal to the Arabians. The troops of Baalbec surprized them at a time when they did not in the least expect it, and made a terrible slaughter of them; after which they speedily retreated to the city, and carried with them a great number of prisoners.

OMAR.

Hegyra 14.
Ch. ær. 635.

Obeidah, being extremely grieved at this check, forthwith took measures to avoid the like surprize for the future. He imagined that his being encamped too near the walls might prove hurtful to him, as he should be liable by that means to have the enemy on his hands every moment. He found, besides, another inconvenience, for his cavalry had not ground enough to act on. He therefore immediately caused the tents to be pitched at a further distance, and by that precaution covered his troops from the machines, of which the enemy had till then made a very advantageous use.

The troops of Baalbec, encouraged by the advantage they had just gained, resolved to try another sally the next day. The governor put himself at their head, and fell with great fury on Obeidah's division, where at first he met with almost the same success as had attended him the day before. They broke all that opposed them, and drove the mussulman general to a great distance. But the besieged, animated by their advantage, and not reflecting how far they were got from the town, still pushed on, and were on the very point of totally routing Obeidah's quarter,

The troops of
Baalbec make
a second sally.

OMAR.
Hegyra 14.
Ch. ær. 635.

when the presence of mind of an Arabian soon caused the face of affairs to change.

Sohaid-ebn-Sabah having been wounded at the beginning of the attack, got away from the field of battle, and with great difficulty gained the summit of a hill which was on the back of the Arabian camp, from whence he could easily see the motions of the two armies.

When he observed Obeidah's troops to give ground before the enemy, he of his own head set fire to a considerable quantity of wood he found on the hill, whereby he raised a great smoke, which was the usual signal amongst the Arabians when they wanted to assemble their troops in the day-time, for at night they made use of a fire.

Obeidah receives succours.

The smoke having been observed by Derar and Saïd, who were very quiet at their posts, they were apprehensive something extraordinary was passing at the general's attack, and that he wanted relief: they forthwith marched with their divisions, and arrived most opportunely to fall on the Grecians, who thought themselves sure of a compleat victory.

The governor being pursued, intrenches himself in a monastery.

Saïd and Derar, when they attacked the Greeks, posted themselves between the christian troops and the town, to prevent them from retiring thither. Herbis, finding himself hard put to it on all sides, and perceiving that his retreat was cut off, caused his troops to form a phalanx, and, in spite of all the efforts of the Arabians, he hewed a passage through them with infinite bravery, and forthwith

with gaining an eminence, on which he found the ruins of an old monastery, he took shelter there, and made the best preparations he could for his defence.

OMAR.

Hegyra 14.
Ch. ær. 635.

Obeidah, who knew not that troops were come to his relief, seeing the Greeks retreat so precipitately at the very time the battle went so much in their favour, concluded it was some stratagem, to draw him into an ambuscade. Wherefore he ordered his men not to pursue them.

But Saïd, who could not possibly be acquainted with the general's order, still skirmished with the Grecians, and followed them up even to the eminence, where he posted troops to secure the avenues. After which he descended with about twenty soldiers, and went to give the general an account of the enemy's disposition.

Obeidah, amazed to see Saïd with so few men, was at first apprehensive that an attack had been also made on that captain's division, and that the soldiers he saw were all who had escaped after the defeat: he asked him with great emotion, what was become of his troops. Saïd answering, that they were appointed to guard the hill, where they had shut up the Greeks, Obeidah demanded how he came there, and for what reason he had quitted his post. Upon this Saïd told him of the signal which had been made, and which he looked upon to be an order from him to march to his assistance.

The

OMAR.

Hegyra 14.
Ch. ær. 635.

The general confessed that in so critical a juncture he wished he could have been able to give the signal, but that circumstances had not permitted him. He then returned thanks to Derar and Saïd for the timely succour they had brought him; but being at the same time desirous to know the person who had set the wood on fire, he caused a proclamation to be made in the camp, that the person to whom they had so great an obligation should come forth. Upon which Sohaid appeared, and confessed that he had done it. Obeidah bestowed great commendations on his presence of mind; tho' at the same he expressly forbid any person to do the like for the future, without the general's permission, since many inconveniences might ensue therefrom.

Whilst Saïd was conferring with Obeidah, the officers who commanded at the avenues of the hill sent for more troops, to restrain the Greeks then besieged thereon. Herbis, at the head of his forces, had made a push in order to regain Baalbec, and was at blows with the Arabians to force his passage; the ground was disputed with equal valour; the Arabians therefore represented to the general, that very bad consequences might attend the not causing a reinforcement to march thither.

Obeidah accordingly ordered Saïd to go back to his men; he caused some companies to march with him, and promised that he would instantly

stantly send another body under the command of Derar.

OMAR.

Hegyra 14.

Ch. ær. 635.

The arrival of these reinforcements sunk the courage of the Grecians, who retired into the monastery, and intrenched themselves in the ruins. The Arabians pressing them very closely, and Herbis, finding he should be unable to extricate himself, took a resolution to treat with the enemy. He accordingly had a conference with Saïd touching the terms he required for the security of himself and his troops, as well as of the city of Baalbec.

Herbis confers with Saïd.

Saïd answered, that he had no power to treat save only of what related personally to him and his forces; in which respect he required that he and all his men should become Mahometans, or at least should engage never to bear arms against the Arabians. He added, that as to the inhabitants of Baalbec, the general was the proper person to whom he must apply, and if he would treat with him, he would introduce him to Obeidah.

Herbis having consented, Saïd brought him to the general. As he passed through the arabian camp, he was amazed to find their forces were not so numerous as he imagined, and he could not help expressing his surprize thereat, when he came to Obeidah. The general answered, that the Christians would be always deceived, because angels came to assist the faithful when their numbers were inferior, in like manner

OMAR.
Hegyra 14.
Ch. ær. 635.

as they had done at the battle of Bedra*, and the rest of the prophet's military expeditions.

Conditions
granted to the
inhabitants of
Baalbec.

The governor being in no condition to gainsay the idle legend, went on to the articles of the treaty. He offered in the name of the citizens a large sum of money, and a great number of rich garments. The Musfulman interrupted him, and said, he must double both the sum, and the other gifts. And he added, by way of articles, that the inhabitants should submit to become tributaries; that they should surrender all such arms as they were possessed of; that they should never attack the Arabians, directly or indirectly; that they should never engage in the emperor's service against them; and finally, that they should build neither churches nor monasteries.

Herbis

* On this subject you may read in the 3d chapter of the Alcoran: "And God hath already given you the victory at Bedra, when you were inferior in numbers; therefore fear God, that ye may be thankful. When thou saidst unto the faithful, Is it not enough that your Lord should assist you with three thousand angels sent down from heaven? Verily, if ye persevere and fear God, and your enemies come upon you suddenly, your Lord will assist you with five thousand angels distinguished by their horses and attire."

An arabian author assures us, that the angels who fought there, were mounted on black and white horses, and that they wore on their heads yellow and white attire, from which hung down between their shoulders ribbons that waved in the wind. They were headed by Gabriel, who being mounted on his steed, named Haïsum, that is to say, the vigorous, and surrounded with a cloud, most terribly discomfited the idolaters on all sides.

Gagnier's life of Mahomet, vol. III.

Herbis thought these conditions a little severe ; but as the general did not seem inclined to mitigate any of the articles, he was forced to accept them. All the favour the governor could obtain was, that the person who should be appointed to collect the tribute should not enter the city, but should encamp without the walls. This grant was expressly mentioned in the treaty, and the governor forthwith departed to go to Baalbec, that he might procure the articles to be ratified by the inhabitants.

OMAR.

Hegyra 14.
Ch. ær. 635.

The terms to which Herbis had consented raised a violent rumour in the city ; it was thought he had made too great concessions to the enemy, and, in short, no person would give his consent to them ; but the inhabitants were somewhat appeased, when the governor had made them sensible that it was the only way left to secure their lives and liberties, and that their refusal to comply, would certainly expose the city to be destroyed by fire and sword by a formidable enemy, who, sooner or later, would carry their point. He added, that in respect to the money which they were to pay to the Arabians, he was ready to lend them his utmost assistance in raising it, and that he proposed to contribute a fourth part of the same. This offer changed all their resolutions, and at last the treaty was ratified.

Herbis returned to Obeidah that he might inform him of what had passed, and as to the payment,

OMAR.
Hegyra 14.
Ch. ær. 635.

payment, he desired a few days to gather in the money. The general consented, and appointed the governor to raise it himself. Obeidah kept with him as hostages the Greeks that accompanied Herbis, who returned at the appointed time, and paid the sum agreed on: after which the hostages were delivered up, and went back with him to the place.

Rafi is made
governor of
Baalbec.

Obeidah forthwith began his march for Emessa; but he first conferred the government of Baalbec on Rafi-ebn-Addallah, one of his bravest captains. However to avoid contravening the article he had consented to, on Herbis's request, he ordered Rafi not to enter the city, but to be vigilant as to what passed in the whole territory belonging to it. He gave him a strict charge not to suffer the soldiers whom he appointed for the garrison to commit any spoil in the neighbourhood. As to the other adjacent places, which had not already treated with the Mussulmen, he gave him liberty to ravage there at his pleasure.

Rafi executed his orders very punctually. The inhabitants of Baalbec, finding they had nothing to fear from such an officer, came and paid their respects to him at his camp, and the Arabians and Grecians then lived together in a perfect harmony. They reaped great advantages by each other; for the Arabians, who plundered the country, often returned with considerable booties, the greatest part of which was many times of no use to them. They found means of putting it off, by the
intercourse

intercourse they had with the inhabitants, who bought what was superfluous to the Arabians; and this kind of commerce was in the sequel very beneficial to both parties.

OMAR.

Hegyra 14.
Ch. ær. 635.

Herbis, finding what great gains the citizens procured, resolved to have a share in them, by way of recompence for the sacrifice he had made in paying one-fourth of the tribute. He remonstrated to them, that they were bound in honour, as well as by gratitude, to allow him a tenth part of their profits. The inhabitants unanimously consented to his demand. The governor, finding with what readiness they had complied with his request, and moreover reflecting that it would be a long time before he should be reimbursed the sum he had advanced, raised his demands, and instead of a tenth, insisted on having the fourth part. The citizens refused to grant him so unreasonable a share; the governor fell into a passion, the people were incensed, and at last an insurrection happened, in which the governor was killed.

Herbis is killed in an insurrection.

The tumult which this affair caused in the city was so great, that it was heard even in the arabian camp. Rasi immediately sent a messenger thither to enquire what passed; and he at the same directed his envoy to offer his mediation, if it might be of any service. The inhabitants informed him of their governor's conduct: they spoke of him as a tyrant, from whom they had happily freed

The Arabians are admitted into Baalbec.

OMAR. freed themselves, and offered Rasi, to admit
 Hegyra 14. him into the city, and put him into posses-
 Ch. ær. 635. sion of the government, if he would ac-
 cept it.

Rasi was highly pleased with the honour they did him ; but he let them know, he could not accept it, without his general's consent. He instantly sent to acquaint Obeidah of the proceedings at Baalbec. The answer was conformable to their request, and the general, at the same time he permitted Rasi to assume the government, bestowed the greatest commendations on his prudent conduct, of which even the Greeks had so good an opinion, as to desire they might live under the Mahometan government.

Siege of
 Emessa.

The mussulman general was then before Emessa, the siege of which place he opened immediately on the expiration of the truce. He first caused them to be summoned to embrace the Mahometan religion, to become tributaries, or to decide the quarrel by a battle. All these proposals having been rejected, the attacks were pushed on very vigorously; but the besieged made so brave a defence, that they baffled the attempts of the Mussulmen; and they even made several sallies, in which they gained great advantages.

Stratagem
 used by the
 Arabians to
 to take
 Emessa.

This obstinate resistance shewed that the siege would be long and bloody. Obeidah wished he had not undertaken it so readily.

One

One of his captains perceiving the perplexity he was under, proposed the making use of a stratagem which might greatly avail him thereafter. It was to make an offer of raising the siege, if the inhabitants would only furnish his army with forage and provisions sufficient for five or six days march, which time he reckoned it would take him up in making his retreat. Obeidah relishing the advice, sent a messenger to the city, and promised that on such conditions, he would forthwith march away to make other conquests.

OMAR.

Hegyra 14.
Ch. ær. 635.

The inhabitants of Emessa, who were overjoyed to think they should get rid of the Mahometans, readily accepted the proposal, and immediately sent the full quantity of provisions. When that was done, Obeidah sent them word, that as the march he proposed to undertake might be longer than he expected, he would willingly purchase the residue of their stock, if they would choose to part with it. They fell in with this snare also, and sold all the rest of their provisions at a very high price; the general not standing to chaffer with them, but giving them what they asked.

He actually raised the siege according to his promise, and marched towards Arestan, which he summoned to surrender. The town having sent out a refusal, Obeidah pretended that he would not stay to besiege the place; and only requested the

The Arabians
take Arestan
by stratagem.

OMAR.
Hegyra 14.
Ch. ær. 635.

governor that he might leave with him some heavy baggage, which would incommode him in his march. This request being readily complied with, Obeidah forthwith sent to the town twenty chests, in which were concealed as many chosen men. The chests were provided with strong locks, which seemed to be well secured on the outside; but were so contrived, that those who were within them could easily make their way out.

Obeidah forthwith marched off with his troops; but he took care to leave Khaled in ambush, at a small distance from the city, with a detachment of troops who could be relied on for the execution of the intended stratagem. The governor and inhabitants of the place, who were happy at the departure of the Arabians, immediately repaired to their church, in order to return thanks to God for their deliverance from so terrible an enemy. But whilst they were in the midst of their prayers and thanksgivings, the twenty men came out of the chests, and having seized the governor's wife, who was left at home, they forced her to deliver up the keys of the town. They instantly ran to the gate over-against the ambuscade, and having opened it, began to cry aloud, "Allah acbar." At this signal Khaled marched up with his detachment, and was prepared to have put to the sword all such as should have made resistance; but

so great was the surprize caused by this event, that not a man thought of taking up arms. OMAR.
Hegyra 14.
Ch. ær. 635.

This inaction of the inhabitants saved them from slaughter. The Arabians only took possession of the place, without committing any acts of violence. Obeidah left in the town a garrison of two thousand men, and then departed to besiege Schaizar. The Mussulmen were not put to the trouble of attacking the place, which surrendered voluntarily. The governor, indeed, would have defended it, and even made a rigorous use of his authority to compel the inhabitants to assist him in the defence; but his cruel behaviour had rendered him so odious to them, that they fell on him and slew him, and forthwith opened their gates to Obeidah. The town of
Schaizar sur-
renders.

That general was so well pleased with their submission, that he declared he would not oblige any of them to change their religion. He added, however, that such as would embrace Mahometism should be exempt from paying tribute during two years, and that such as persisted in Christianity, should enjoy such exemption only one year.

Obeidah, having made these conquests, thought it time he should return to Emessa. He had promised he would depart from before the city, and had performed that promise, so that he pretended he should not break his word by sitting down again before the place. Hegyra 15.
Ch. ær. 636.
The Arabians
sit down
again before
Emessa.

OMAR.
Hegyra 15.
Ch. ær. 636.

The governor who was not of the same opinion, loudly reproached the Mussulman for a breach of the treaty. He sent a deputation on that account to Obeidah, who by way of justifying himself returned for answer, that he indeed had given his word he would depart from Emessa, but had never engaged that he would not return again.

They are defeated in a sally.

The governor was then sensible of the fault he had committed, in parting with the ammunition he had provided for the defence of the place; but as it could answer no good end to waste his time in repining, he resolved to make the utmost resistance in his power; and even to try his fortune in the open field. His first steps were attended with the greatest success. Sallying out of the town, therefore, with five thousand men only, he boldly marched up to the Arabians and attacked them, tho' they were much superior in strength. He drove back the first ranks, and totally alarmed all the rest; a great number of Arabians fell by the sword of the troops of Emessa, and the mussulman army would have been totally routed, but for the amazing efforts of the brave Khaled, who rallied the fugitives, and on that critical occasion made so well-contrived a motion, that he stopped the progress of the enemy, and prevented them from pushing their advantage any farther.

In that action the gallant Khaled was often in the greatest danger, amongst others, he

he was assaulted by a Grecian horseman, against whom he defended himself with great resolution. In that situation he gave an evident proof of his art and strength. His sword happening to break during the combat, he dexterously avoided his adversaries blows, and seizing him round the middle, he gave him so violent a squeeze, that he killed him, and threw him dead on the spot.

OMAR.
Hegyra 15.
Ch. ær. 636.

Tho' the troops of Emessa were victorious, yet they found themselves so exhausted by this violent encounter; that they retreated to the city, resolving to second their blow, so soon as the troops should be a little rested. The next day they marched out again, and offered the Mahometans battle a second time, but the event was widely different.

Obeidah had held a long conference with Khaled on the means they should take to wipe off the affront of the preceding day; for he expected that the enemy, elated by one victory, would not be long ere they endeavoured to gain a second. After mature deliberation, Khaled was of opinion that Obeidah should suffer the enemy to advance; and that on their approach he should purposely give way, and feign a retreat; that on a certain signal, (which they agreed upon,) the general should cause his troops to face about, and keep the enemy in play, and that at the very moment the signal was made, Khaled with a body of reserve, should sud-

Second fallly,
in which the
troops of
Emessa are
defeated.

OMAR.
Hegyra 15.
Ch. ar. 636.

denly appear, and posting themselves between the city of Emessa, and the troops of the garrison, should attack the enemy in the rear, and soon prevent their making any defence.

This stratagem was successful in all points. The forces of Emessa sallied out headed by their governor, who was that day remarkable for the richness of his dress, and still more for the confidence of his looks, which teemed with a full persuasion of victory. The combat was soon began, and Obeidah after a faint resistance, caused his troops to retire by degrees. The Emessians fell on more furiously than before: but at the same instant Khaled attacked them in the rear, and obliged them to face on all sides. The Emessians sustained the shock with great intrepidity, but the governor and many of their bravest officers having been killed or wounded, the troops lost all courage, and suffered themselves to be massacred without making scarce any resistance.

The slaughter would have been much greater, had not some detachments sallied out to relieve their countrymen. The Mussulmen were then obliged to join, to make head against the fresh troops. But they had no design to attack; they only continued firm, and in good order for some time, that they might gather together the fugitives, and protect such as had escaped from the sword of the enemy. They afterwards

terwards retired into the city with the broken remains of their forces.

OMAR,
Hegyra. 15,
Ch. ær. 636.

This was so terrible a blow to the inhabitants of Emessa, that they gave over all thoughts of defending themselves, and were unanimous for treating with the conquerors; from whom they obtained very favourable terms. Obeidah satisfied with their becoming tributaries, left them the full enjoyment of their liberty; and to shew how much he relied on their promises, he would not enter the city, nor even leave a garrison there.

Emessa capitulates.

But in truth, he had a very good reason not to leave any, and even not to waste time in taking possession of the place. For he had received intelligence that the Emperor had sent out a numerous army against the Mussulmen, and they had room to expect a battle, which might prove decisive. It was therefore of the utmost importance not to part with any of his troops, but to have them in readiness to face the enemy, who were reported to have used their utmost efforts to assemble a much stronger army than they had ever sent into the field before. Heraclius gave the command of his troops to a lord called by the Orientals, Mahan. But it is conjectured from dates that it is the same whom the Greeks called Manuel, and who was the greatest captain of the age.

The emperor
sends an army
against the
Arabians.

OMAR. That army was on its march reinforced by a body of troops under the command of Giabalah; the same who had incurred Omar's displeasure, as has been already noted. Mahan placed that body at the head of his forces. He depended upon their being so much the more serviceable, as the soldiers of which it was formed were Arabians by nation, and consequently of the same country with the Mussulmen, and were the best acquainted with their manner of fighting. These Arabians were all Christians, and of the same church with the Emperor's forces.

The Arabians deliberate on their future conduct.

The Mussulmen however were under some concern at the approach of the imperial army. Some of them proposed returning to Arabia, in order to recruit the troops. Obeidah was pretty much inclined to that opinion, but fearing lest he should be blamed by the Caliph, he openly gave it no great countenance: besides, the major part of the Mahometans declared they would not quit their ground, but wait till they were attacked. They could not think of abandoning Syria, a province so rich and fertile, and abounding in stately cities, most of which they had won by the points of their swords, to retire into their poor and barren country, there to undergo the burning heat of the sun amidst their unfruitful deserts.

These

These jarring opinions having been debated in council, Khaled proposed a medium, which they all agreed to. After having remonstrated that it would be unseemly to retire into Arabia like fugitives; he at the same time shewed that it would be too dangerous for them to continue where they were then stationed, on account of the proximity of Constantine, the Emperor's son, who was no further off than Cefarea, at the head of forty thousand men: that Mahan was advanced into the neighbourhood of that prince with the imperial army, whilst on the other hand Giabalah was approaching to join the Grecians: wherefore the safest way was to march to Yermouk *, which lying in a country belonging to them, and at no great distance from Arabia, they might easily receive such succours as might be sent them, or even retire, if the fortune of war should be adverse.

OMAR.
Hegyra 15.
Ch. ær. 636.

This advice was judged to be so prudent, that the whole council concurred in it. Orders were forthwith issued, and the mahometan army began their march for Yermouk, whither they retired with as much unconcern as if they had no enemy to fear.

Constantine was no sooner informed of the retreat of the Arabians, than he reproached the emperor's general for not having fallen

* A city in Syria, lying on the river of that name.

OMRR.
Hegyra 15.
Ch. ær. 636.

upon them in their march. But he was greatly astonished, when Mahan sent him word, that he had done no more than obey the orders Heraclius had given him ; that his sovereign had charged him to undertake nothing against the Mussulmen, till he had previously tried all means to bring about a peace with them.

Mahan actually negociated with Obeidah, and proposed to him many terms, which were all rejected : the Mussulman also thought fit to treat with Giabalah, that he might prevail on him at least to observe a neutrality ; but the latter refused to come into any accommodation.

Khaled de-
feats the corps
commanded
by Giabalah.

Khaled enraged to see an Arabian so cruelly bent against his own countrymen, advised Obeidah to attack him speedily, before he could join the imperial army. He undertook the conduct of the enterprize, and desired but few troops to put it in execution. Obeidah having consented, Khaled began his march in quest of Giabalah ; and falling upon him with his accustomed intrepidity, he broke his troops, and obliged him to fly with the greatest precipitation ; but not till after making a vigorous resistance, which cost the Mussulmen dear ; for besides the brave soldiers who lost their lives on that occasion, several of them were made prisoners, amongst which were Yefid, Rasi, and Derar, all men of note, and who might be considered as the flower of the officers.

The

The defeat of Giabalah was a matter of too much consequence to delay sending news of it to the Caliph. Obeidah therefore instantly dispatched a courier to Medina, with an account of that important event; and he at the same time intreated Omar speedily to send him succours against the formidable army of the Christians.

Omar caused eight thousand men to march without delay; the command of which body he gave to Saïd-ebn-Amir. That officer, in pursuance of the orders he had received, made forced marches to come up with Obeidah, but having missed his way, he fell in with a detachment of Grecians, commanded by the governor of Amman. This rencounter retarded his march; though, for no longer time than the action lasted, in which all the grecian infantry were cut to pieces. The governor having escaped from the slaughter, with his cavalry, was afterwards met with by an arabian party, who were scouring the country for plunder; between whom another action happened; and the governor, with the greatest part of his horse, were killed on the spot.

Saïd, and his troops, who pursued the flying enemy, were doubly pleased at an accident, which at the same time it rendered their victory compleat, afforded them the means of taking the shortest way to join the main army. But before they began
their

OMAR.

Hegyra 15.
Ch. ær. 636.The Caliph
sends a rein-
forcement,
which in their
march defeat
a Grecian
party.

OMAR.
 Hegyra 15.
 Ch. ær. 636.

their march, they cut off the heads of a great number of the horsemen, who had been killed in the engagement, and having flead off their skins, they fixed them on the points of their lances, and entered the camp, bearing with them those hideous trophies of their victory.

The arrival of those reinforcements, and the advantages the Mahometans had just obtained, furnished ample matter for reflection to the general of the grecian army. Although his first negociation had been unsuccessful, he resolved to try a second, to which end he sent a messenger to Obeidah, and desired he would appoint some trusty person to confer with him.

Khaled offering to undertake that commission, Obeidah appointed him with great readiness, and he instantly set out for the grecian camp, accompanied by some officers of note. Mahan received them in his tent, where he was seated in a kind of throne, near which he had placed seats for Khaled, and those of his train : but the latter roughly pushed away the chairs, and sat on the ground. The grecian general seeming surprized at their refusing the seats he had provided for them, Khaled told him, that the custom of the Mahometans in that respect, was much more noble than the Christian usage, the earth being the seat which God had appointed for his apostle Mahomet, and

and which the prophet had left to the Mus-
fulmen, his disciples.

OMAR.
Hegyra 15.
Ch. ær. 636.

The Arabian author who relates these particulars, and many others of no greater importance, is silent as to the chief object of the conference: and all that can be gathered from his relation, is, that the conversation between those two captains was highly seasoned with civilities and invectives quite foreign to the matter in question.

After Khaled had spoke for some time, Mahan paid him great compliments; he told him he had before looked on the Arabians to be an ignorant unpolite people; but the conversation which had passed between them, had freed him from his prejudice, and given him a very different idea from the notion entertained of them by the Grecians.

Khaled agreed, that the Arabians were not only reputed to be ignorant and unpolite, but actually were so, till the time of Mahomet's appearance; but that since the prophet had illuminated them with the celestial light, to guide their feet in the paths of truth and salvation, the face of things had greatly changed its aspect.

But it was not long ere he shewed the change was not so effectual as he pretended. For the conversation growing a little warm between them, Khaled told the grecian general very plainly, that he hoped to see him brought in a halter before the Caliph,
in

OMAR. in order to have his head cut off. It may
 Hegyra 15. be supposed that Khaled would scarce have
 Ch. ær. 636. run such indecent lengths, if he had not
 been heated by the altercations which might
 arise on some of the articles then proposed.
 But however that was, the arabian author
 hath not given us the least light into the
 matter, though surely it was not beneath his
 attention.

Mahan being justly enraged at Khaled's
 words, answered, that if it were not for
 the law of nations, which made his person
 sacred, his head should pay for the insolent
 language he had given him; but as his
 publick character was a security for him,
 he would take vengeance on the prisoners he
 then had in his power; and he ordered they
 should be forthwith brought before him.

“ Take care of what you do” replied Kha-
 led, in a fury, “ for I swear by Mahomet,
 that if you go about to execute what you have
 threatened, I will kill you with my own hand.
 On this he drew his sword, which he bran-
 dished in a menacing way, and the Arabians
 who were with him did the like.

Mahan did not think fit to push matters
 any farther. On the contrary, he grew calm,
 and resumed the conversation with the same
 composure as if nothing had happened to
 ruffle him. They even concluded the con-
 ference by compliments and reciprocal pre-
 sents. Khaled observing that Mahan seemed
 to like a scarlet tent, which he had caused to

be erected for him in the grecian camp, generously offered it to him; the general accepted the gift, and in return presented him with all the prisoners, whose heads he had just threatened to take off. He would also have added other presents, but Khaled refused them. He was fully satisfied with having regained the prisoners, who were the same that Giabalah had taken, and which he had brought to the imperial camp.

OMAR.
Hegyra 15.
Ch. ær. 636.

Tho' the Arabian author, who has been so liberal of his minute particulars, has left us in the dark as to the main purpose of the conference, yet it is certain that no terms were agreed on; and each side prepared to decide the quarrel by the famous battle of Yermouk, which was fought soon afterwards.

On that occasion Obeidah gave a manifest proof of greatness of mind, as well as zeal for the public good. That general perfectly well understood the detail of an army, and particularly the order for marching, encamping, and making a disposition of troops; but he was not calculated to shine in the heat of an action: not that he was absolutely without courage, but he was not remarkable for bravery; and what distinguished him from many officers of the same temper, he freely confessed it himself.

Being sensible therefore that the approaching battle would decide the fate of Syria, he openly acknowledged Khaled's superior courage, by restoring to him the command of the army. For his part he placed himself in the rear guard, under

Obeidah restores to Khaled the command of the army.

OMAR.
Hegyra 15.
Ch. ær. 636.

under the yellow standard which Abubecre delivered to him at his departure for Syria. It was the same under which Mahomet fought, in the war he waged against the Jews of that country.

Besides, it was absolutely necessary there should be an officer with the rear guard, who had authority enough to keep the Arabians to their duty, and prevent them from giving ground; for it had been observed that in the latter encounters which passed between them and the Greeks, they could scarce stand the first brunt; the Arabians seeming to dread its fury, and were not to be depended upon, till heated by action.

Battle of Yermouk won by the Arabians.

The very same thing happened at the beginning of the battle of Yermouk. The right wing of the mussulman cavalry was broke, the greatest part of them took to flight; but they were soon forced to return to the combat. The arabian women, who were posted in the rear of their army, stopped the fugitives, and some they treated very cruelly for attempting to leap over the obstacle they placed in their way. They paid no respect to persons; and Sofian himself, one of the most valiant captains amongst the Mussulmen, being unable to stand the impetuous attack of the enemy, and forced to make a retreat, not much unlike a flight, those brave heroines spared him no more than another, and one of them having no weapon she could attack him with, made use of a tent-

tent-pole, and therewith dealt him a violent blow, which stopped him short in his flight. OMAR.
Hegyra 15.
Ch. ær. 636.

The Arabians were greatly worsted in this first battle, (for they fought several days successively) but they resumed fresh courage in the following engagements; and after several bloody actions, in which the Grecians fought with the most desperate fury, the latter were forced to yield to the bravery of the Mahometans; who, blushing that they had given way at the first onset of the enemy, gloriously repaired in the sequel the faults they had committed the first day.

Obeidah, who in that juncture had prudently given up to Khaled the sole direction of all military operations, did not in the least interfere with that commander during the course of the several actions which followed each other. His only care was to see that public prayers were punctually performed in the camp, and to visit the wounded; some of whom he even dressed with his own hand.

The grecian army having been totally routed, the Mussulmen remained masters of the field of battle, and had no longer any cause to fear they should be interrupted in the possession of Syria's fertile provinces. Obeidah therefore resumed the command of the army, and having given them some time for rest at Yermouk, he marched the troops to Damascus, whence he wrote to the Caliph an account of the success of the Mussulmen.

OMAR.

Hegyra 15.
Ch. ær. 636.

If credit may be given to the contents of that letter, it is no wonder the Arabians remained sole masters of the entire province of Syria. For after the terrible loss the Grecians had sustained, there could be no troops left to defend it. The number killed on their side amounted to one hundred and fifty thousand men; forty thousand of their troops were taken prisoners, and amongst them Mahan their general, who was shortly afterwards slain at Damascus. The Mussulmen had only four thousand and thirty men killed on the spot.

Obeidah's letter to inform the Caliph of the success of the battle.

Besides the prodigious number of Greeks that fell on the field of battle, the Mussulmen slew all such as they met with in the country, who were capable of interrupting their conquests. "We have" "said Obeidah to the Caliph, entirely destroyed all those that fled to the mountains and deserts. We have secured all the passages, and God has given into our hands the country of the Christians, their riches, and their children." The general concludes his letter thus: "Written from Damascus, whither we are arrived after the victory, and where I wait for your orders touching a division of the booty," &c.

This news, which was of so great importance to the nation, doubtless gave great joy to the inhabitants of Medina, and in particular to the Caliph, who immediately wrote to Obeidah to congratulate him on his victory. He commanded him to acquaint all the Mussulmen of his army how well pleased he was with

with the service they had done their country ; and ended his letter with a charge that the general would rest his troops at Damascus till further orders. As to the booty, he did not give any directions.

OMAR.

Hegyra 15.
Ch.ær. 636.

Obeidah therefore took upon him to make an allotment of it, which he performed with the nicest judgment and strictest equity ; and he had the pleasure to receive the Caliph's approbation, when he sent him an account of the manner in which he had thought fit to divide it. After having given his troops about a month's time to recover their fatigues, he wrote to the Caliph for his orders as to the future operations of the army.

An answer was soon dispatched to him. Omar, by advice of his council, ordered that siege should be laid to Jerusalem, a city which the Arabians had long wished to be masters of, because it was the place of sepulture of many of the prophets ; and especially as Mahomet had been always very desirous of possessing it.

The Arabians
besiege Jeru-
salem.

Obeidah forthwith caused a body of troops to file off towards Jerusalem. The first detachment that departed consisted of five thousand men, the command of which he gave to Abu Sofian ; and sent shortly after them several other bodies which were all to join before the walls of the place. Sofian immediately summoned the town, and even proposed terms, which were all rejected. He therefore resolved to begin his approaches, and actually battered the place for ten days without ceas-

OMAR.
Hegyra. 15.
Ch. ær. 636.

ing. But the besieged made a very vigorous defence, inasmuch that the attempts of the Mussulmen were rendered fruitless.

About this time Obeidah arrived with the remainder of the forces; when he imagined the besieged would be intimidated at sight of so numerous an army, and inclined to surrender on terms. Wherefore he resolved to write them a letter, in which, after the usual preamble, he expressed himself as follows:

“ We require you to declare that there is but one God; that Mahomet is his apostle; that there will be a day of judgment; and that God will raise up the dead from the grave.

“ If you make this confession, it will be no longer lawful for us to shed your blood, or take away your riches, or your children. If you refuse to do it, submit yourselves to pay tribute, otherwise I will send out against you men who embrace death with greater readiness than you swallow wine and the flesh of hogs*; and if it pleaseth God, I will not depart till I have brought you and your children into slavery, after having destroyed your champions, and all that fight for you.”

This letter was directed “ To the chief commanders of the people of Ælia:” which name had been given to Jerusalem ever since the city was rebuilt by the emperor Ælius Adrianus.

* The use of wine, and the flesh of hogs, are both prohibited by the Alcoran.

The threats of the mussulman general did not intimidate the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They continued to make a most obstinate defence, during more than four months; in which time many very brisk actions happened, whereby in the end the besieged were greatly weakened. As to the Mussulmen, they daily gave proofs of their courage, and which, instead of being abated, seemed to be heightened by dangers and difficulties. Besides the continual sallies against which they were forced to be ever on their guard, they had the weather to struggle with, which was almost insupportable. The winter was excessively cold that year, and tents, which were their only covering, must have proved a very slight security against the severity of the season. But, spight of these obstacles, they seemed resolved to carry the place, or die before it's walls.

So inflexible an obstinacy caused great sorrow and dejection of mind in the besieged. They foresaw that sooner or later the Mussulmen would find a way into the place, and if the city should unhappily be taken by storm, the Arabians would make themselves a cruel amends for the pains and fatigue they forced them to undergo. These sad ideas made such an impression upon the chief inhabitants, that at last they resolved to offer terms for a surrender.

Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem, a prelate venerable on account of his age, as well as

OMAR.
Hegyra 15.
Ch. ær. 636.

Conference
between
Obeidah and
the patriarch
for of Jerusalem.

OMAR.
Hegyra 15.
Ch. ær. 636.

for his dignity, and personal merit, was requested to go and confer with Obeidah. The patriarch readily undertook the commission, and had a long conference with the mussulman general. After many proposals, he represented to him that Jerusalem was the holy city, and that God had denounced his wrath against him that dared enter it in an hostile manner.

Obeidah's
answer.

“We know,” replied Obeidah, “that Jerusalem gave birth, and afforded a burying place to many of the prophets. In that famous city, Mahomet * our prophet was one night

* The Mussulmen believe that Mahomet, having been carried one night by the angel Gabriel from Mecca to Jerusalem, was thence taken up into heaven, where he saw the wondrous things, an account of which is contained in Gagnier's life of that prophet. The relation of it, which consists only of what Mahomet pretended he saw during that night, fills the twelve first chapters of the second book. In order to give a specimen of the manner in which the whole story is told, it will be sufficient to quote what the prophet says, as to the preparations for his journey.

“One night,” says he, “I lay sleeping betwixt the two hills of Safah and Merwah. The night was very dark and gloomy, but so still, that the dogs were not heard to bark, nor the cocks to crow. On a sudden the angel Gabriel stood before me, in the very form wherein the most high God created him; his skin was white as snow, his locks were flaxen, and fell in flowing ringlets o'er his shoulders. His countenance was majestic, open and serene. His teeth were bright and even, and his legs yellow like the saphire. His raiment was embroidered with pearl and the finest gold. On his forehead he bore a plate, on which were inscribed two lines shining like the light. In the first were written these words: There is no God but God. In the second these: Mahomet is the apostle of God. At sight of this, I was struck with the utmost astonishment and confusion. I saw round about him seventy thousand little purses filled with

musk.

night taken up even into heaven. And that he approached the presence of God, within reach of the flight of two shafts. We are his disciples, and consequently more worthy the possession of it than you: and we shall not give over the siege, until it shall please

OMAR.

Hegyra 15.
Ch. ær. 636.

musk and saffron: he had five hundred pair of wings, and the distance of one wing from another was five hundred years journey."

Mahomet then relates the invitation he received from the angel Gabriel to go with him and see God; and that he might perform the journey more conveniently, he mounted him on a very extraordinary kind of beast, whom the angel led by the bridle. Mahomet thus describes the beast.

"You must know," says the prophet, "that this animal in no wise resembles any of our animals, and thus he is nearly formed: He is larger than an ass, and smaller than a mule: his colour is white; he hath an human face, and an horses mouth; his mane is of fine pearls strewed with dazies and hyacinth flowers, and embroidered with light. His ears are of emeralds; his eyes are two large hyacinths, shining like the stars in the firmament, and darting forth rays like the sun. His right temple is strewed with inchased pearls, and his left temple is covered with plates of gold. His neck, breast, and back, are thick set with various kinds of precious stones, whence proceeds a lustre like the stars in the firmament, or like the glaring lightning, or like a flame of fire. His tail is overlaid with emeralds. It is long; and waving it on each side, therewith he strikes his sides and his fetlocks. He hath two wings like those of an eagle, and large as the circumference of a great pool, strewed with pearl, and enamelled like a meadow, and covered with precious stones. From his sides proceed an agreeable odour of musk and saffron. He hath a soul like the human soul. He hears and understands what is said to him, but can neither speak nor answer. The reins of his bridle are pearls strung with precious stones and hyacinths. His chains are gold and silver. His bridle is of red hyacinth. His two wings are embroidered with light, and he makes use of them to fly like other birds.

Gagnier's life of Mahomet, vol. I. Book II.

God

OMAR.
Hegyra 15.
Ch. ær. 636.

God to deliver the city into our hands, in like manner as he hath done by many others.

The patriarch, who was directed to agree on terms at any rate, treated about the surrender of the place, and had nothing to do but to get the most favourable terms he could: when he had settled the principal articles with Obeidah, he requested, that out of regard to a city of so great note, they would grant one more condition, namely, that the Caliph should come and take possession of the place in person.

Obeidah agreed to this article also, as far as lay in his power; that is to say, he promised he would forthwith dispatch a courier to Medina, to acquaint the Caliph of his request.

Obeidah invites Omar to come and take possession of Jerusalem.

The mussulman general forthwith wrote to the Caliph, sent him the important news of the capitulation, and desired he would make known to him his intentions as to the last article, which they seemed strongly to insist on.

Omar holds a council on that matter.

Omar forthwith held a council, to deliberate on the resolution he ought to take. Othman, one of his chief counsellors, and who will shortly appear on the mussulman throne, was of opinion the Caliph ought not to undertake the voyage. He represented that it was proper to shew the Christians how much they despised them, and that they did not think them worthy of being honoured with the Caliph's presence.

Ali, who spoke next, was of a contrary opinion. He asserted, that by refusing to comply

comply with the Christians, who only waited for the Caliph's appearance in order to make a full submission, they would run a risque of protracting the war, and of renewing the attacks, which would cost the faithful much blood. And further he shewed, that Omar's presence would give infinite pleasure to his troops, and be the greatest consolation they could receive, after the continual fatigues they had undergone in a siege of so long duration. In a word, he insisted on the dignity of Jerusalem, a place which was equally revered by Mahometans and Christians, and on which he thought the Caliph ought to bestow some token of his respect.

The latter opinion having been approved of by the council, the voyage was resolved on. Omar appointed Ali to be regent during his absence, and forthwith began his journey with a very small retinue, and with an equipage in no wise resembling the vain-glorious pageantry of the antient Asiatics, so remarkable in history for their luxury and effeminacy.

The Caliph was mounted on a sorrel-coloured camel, which also carried two bags; the one containing unsodden rice *, and wheat in the grain; in the other were some fruits. He bore also with him a leathern vessel filled with water, and a dish, which was only made of wood. When he halted to rest himself, as

* This food is by the Arabs called Sawick.

OMAR.
 Hegyra 15.
 Ch. ær. 636.

well as to take some food, his repast was soon ready : the Caliph caused the provisions he had brought to be served out, and his fellow-travellers eat with him out of the same dish. From so plain an appearance, it would have been difficult (if we consider however the present manners and customs amongst us) to have discerned the sovereign of an immense country, and the conqueror of the Greeks. But the Mussulmen of those days, who were far from being captivated with tinsel of pomp and outward shew, chose their their Caliphs only on account of of their courage, their virtue, and their love for the public good.

The plain and humble figure which Omar made in his progress, gained him respect in all places through which he passed. In many parts they even intreated he would stop, and give his opinion in matters relating to the state, as well as private persons.

The Caliph
 on his way
 passes several
 equitable sen-
 tences.

Amongst others, a complaint having been exhibited before him against a man who had married two sisters, (such kind of marriage had for a long time been very frequent amongst the Arabians, but the prophet had absolutely prohibited them in the Alcoran) the Caliph caused the accused person to be brought before him, and commanded that in obedience to Mahomet's law he should quit one of his wives. The man, against whom the sentence was pronounced, made bitter complaints on that account; he openly murmured against the

the mussulman doctrine, and even said he was sorry to the last degree he had ever embraced it. The Caliph in a rage struck him over the head with his staff, and said, “What dost thou dare to revile Islamism, which is the religion of God, of his angels, and of his apostles? know, that such as renounce it forfeit their heads.”

OMAR.

Hgyra 15.

Ch. ær. 636.

This menace having silenced all complaints, nothing remained but for the husband to make his option, in obedience to the Caliph's decree: but as the person accused had an equal love for them both, he was at the greatest loss which to chuse. Omar therefore put an end to his uncertainty by ordering lots to be cast, and as the lot fell thrice on the same woman, she was chosen, and the other dismissed.

As the Caliph continued his journey, he found several wretches bound fast to trees, and exposed to the heat of the sun, which is a terrible punishment in so hot a climate. Having enquired of them wherefore they had been condemned to undergo so rigorous a torment, they answered, they were poor debtors, unable to satisfy their creditors, for which cause their masters had treated them so cruelly. The Caliph ordered them to be immediately unbound, and having sent for those to whom they were indebted, he spoke these words; “Cease to torment these poor men, and do not require of them more than they can perform. For I have often heard the prophet say,

OMAR.
Hegyra 15.
Ch. ær. 636.

say, do not make men suffer affliction; for such as afflict them in this world, will be punished in hell."

In a short time he passed another sentence relating to the conduct of an old man, who, having married a young wife, permitted a youth, who was his servant, to share with him the nuptial delights; and they had so contrived matters as to enjoy her each his day. The Caliph having represented to him that such a commerce was in itself infamous, and that it was also expressly prohibited by the Alcoran, absolutely commanded the young man to cease his correspondence with the woman, and even threatened he would cause his head to be cut off, if he heard they acted contrary to his orders.

The Caliph
arrives at the
arabian camp,
and reforms
several abuses.

Having made several other necessary regulations during his progress, he arrived at last on the frontiers of Syria, and shortly afterwards went to the arabian camp. The day after his arrival, he performed the morning service, and ended his prayer with an exhortation. He afterwards visited the camp, and abolished many evil customs which were taking root amongst the troops. He observed in particular, that they were cloathed in garments of costly silk, which they had acquired by plundering the Christians. He was displeased at their luxury to so great a degree, that he instantly caused the guilty to be rigorously punished, and their cloaths to be torn in pieces.

He

He was justly apprehensive that their taste for dress and splendor, increasing by imperceptible degrees, would spoil the simplicity and modesty of the Mussulmen, and make them lukewarm as to religion.

OMAR.

Hegyra 15.
Ch. ær. 636.

So soon as news came to Jerusalem of the Caliph's arrival, they sent out deputies to compliment him, and at the same time to negotiate the articles of capitulation. After a few conferences, Omar with his own hand drew up the following writing, which served, as it were, for a model for all the capitulations afterwards granted by the Mussulmen to the Christians.

“ The Christians shall build no new churches, either in the city or the adjacent territory. They shall not hinder the Mussulmen from entering their churches, either by day or by night. They shall open the doors of them to all passengers and travellers. If any Mussulman, being on a journey, shall come to their city and sojourn there, they shall entertain him at their own expence during the three first days after his arrival.

Capitulation
granted to the
inhabitants of
Jerusalem.

“ They shall not teach the Alcoran to their children; they shall not speak openly of their religion. They shall persuade no person to embrace it, and shall not hinder their kinsfolks from becoming Mussulmen.

“ They shall not be cloathed like the Mussulmen. They shall not wear turbans, or be shod like them; nor shall they part their hair in the same manner. They shall not
speak

OMAR.
Hegyra 15.
Ch. ær. 636.

ſpeak the arabian tongue, nor bear the ſame names.

“ They ſhall riſe to ſhew reſpect to the Muſſulmen, and continue ſtanding till they are ſeated. They ſhall make uſe of no ſaddles for riding on horſeback, and ſhall carry no arms. They ſhall ſell no wine. They ſhall wear girdles. They ſhall erect no croſſes on their churches, and ſhall carry none in the ſtreets of the Muſſulmen. They ſhall not ring their bells, but they may toll them. They ſhall make uſe of no ſervant who hath been in the ſervice of a Muſſulman.”

The Caliph
enters Jeruſa-
lem, and
views the
churches.

Theſe articles having been ſigned by both parties, the Caliph made his entry into Jeruſalem with a numerous retinue. The patriarch coming out to receive him, Omar asked him ſeveral queſtions touching the antiquities of the city, and requested that he would ſhew him the fineſt churches. In the firſt he viſited, he enquired whether he might not ſay his prayers there. The patriarch answered, that it was in his power to do what he thought fit; on which the Caliph forthwith left the church without praying. He was conducted in like manner to the other churches which were ſhewn him, and he did not ſtop till he came to the church of Conſtantine. After having curiouſly examined the beauty of that edifice, he fell on his knees upon the ſteps leading
to

to the east door, and there continued some time in prayer. OMAR.

When he had made an end, he arose, and said to the patriarch, “ Doubtless you think my behaviour a little strange, but know it was occasioned by my regard for you, with an intent that I might preserve to you the full possession of your churches ; for had I once uttered my prayers therein, it would have been out of my power to secure them for you : the Mussulmen would have challenged and seized them on account of the right they claim of performing their devotions in those places where the Caliph has once prayed.” Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

Omar foreseeing that the Arabians would consequently go at their pleasure to pray on the steps of Constantine’s church, he called for the capitulation, and with his own hand added an article, importing, that the Mussulmen should not pray on the steps, or before the porches of any of the christian churches, save only one at a time ; and that the Muezins, that is to say the common criers, who summoned people to prayers, should not stand at those places to call the Mahometans thither. Article added to the capitulation in respect to the churches.

Omar, having visited what was worthy attention in the newly-conquered city, desired they would shew him the spot on which Solomon had in former days erected a temple to the Lord : and he made choice of that place whereon to erect a stately mosque

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

Singular
proof of the
veneration
which the
Mussulmen
bear to the
patriarchs.

Gen. xxviii.
11, 12.

mosque for performance of the mahometan worship.

Historians in general relate an extraordinary act of the Caliph, which passed at the time they shewed him the stone, which (they said) served Jacob as a pillow, when he had the vision of the mystical ladder. The Christians had taken no care of the stone, or the place where it was fixed, in-
somuch that it was almost buried in filth. Omar, being greatly offended at the neglect they had shewn to so venerable a monument, resolved to cleanse the place himself. To which end he took up in the flap of his robe as much filth as it could contain, and carried it to some distance, where he threw it down. The Mussulmen who accompanied him took a pride in following his example; and in a few moments the stone, as well as the ground about it, were rendered tolerably clean. The Caliph then ordered his attendants to wash the stone, after which he fell on his knees and prayed. This incident is a manifest proof of the great veneration which the first Mussulmen shewed to the antient patriarchs.

Omar divides
the govern-
ments of the
provinces of
Syria.

Omar tarried some time longer at Jerusalem. He held several councils there, and during his abode, was busied in regulating affairs, as well such as related to the government of the city, as to the mussulman state, and particularly the newly-conquered countries. He gave to Abu-Obeidah the go-
vernment

vernment of Northern Syria, in which were the cities of Aleppo, Hauran, &c. Abu-Sofian was made governor of the southern part, which consisted of Palestine and the maritime towns. And as Egypt had not been attacked by the Mussulmen, Amru-ebn-al-As was appointed to undertake the conquest of that country.

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

During the time the Caliph was at Jerusalem, a Jew, named Caab, came to confer with him touching Mahometism, which he was willing to embrace. His father (who was a rabbi deeply learned in the law of Moses) having, he said, often observed that Mahomet would be the seal of the prophets, he therefore desired Omar to give him some account of the Mahometan doctrine.

Caab embraces Mahometism.

The Caliph readily complied with his request, and quoted several passages in the Alcoran, likely to take with a man brought up in the Jewish faith. He told Caab, that Abraham recommended the mahometan religion to his children, and that Jacob did the like. Secondly, that Abraham was neither Jew nor Christian, but an orthodox Mussulman, and not of the number of those that join partners with God. And lastly, he instanced what Mahomet had frequently repeated to his disciples. "Your religion," said the prophet, "is the same with that of your father Abraham. He gave you the name of Mussulman. You believe in one only God; the Christians believe in

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; which is giving God equals, and acknowledging several Gods. Glorify yourselves, therefore, in the name of Unitarians, and acknowledge but one God, in like manner as your father Abraham did." The Jew being satisfied with those proofs, instantly embraced Mahometism, and made his public profession in presence of the Caliph. The conversion of this man greatly affected Omar, who openly declared, he was as much pleased with the acquisition of that proselite, as with the conquest of Jerusalem: and the better to strengthen the new Mussulman in his faith, he invited him to go to Medina, and visit the prophet's tomb*.

Omar returns
to Medina.

Omar made no delay in returning to that city, where he was received with so much the more joy, as they feared he would have fixed his residence at Jerusalem. They knew he entertained a great veneration for that city; and besides, the beauty of the country, the fertility of the neighbouring parts, and the temperature and wholesomeness of the climate, were advantages which made them apprehensive lest the Caliph should prefer that situation to any other. But Omar, who was unmoved by merely sensual pleasures, did not hesitate a moment in returning to Medina, which he con-

* It is suspected that this is the same Caab who became a proselite in Mahomet's time, above ten years before Omar took Jerusalem.

sidered as the cradle of Mahometism, and the centre of religion.

Obeidah also departed from Jerusalem, shortly after Omar left that city, and went to take possession of the government which the Caliph had conferred on him. His first care was to subdue several cities which still remained in possession of the Christians. He in a short time became master of Kennefrin and Alhadir, which surrendered on terms; and on the inhabitants whereof he raised very considerable sums of money. He then formed a design of approaching Aleppo, that he might make that city also undergo the same fate.

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.
Obeidah seizes several towns.

The place was already hotly alarmed; the chief part of the citizens, who were in possession of immense riches which they had acquired by trade, were very ready to treat with the enemy, to avoid the dismal effects of a siege, which might cause the utter ruin of the city, as well as of their fortunes. They imparted their design to some officers belonging to the troops in the castle; but opinions were divided, and at last it was agreed they should prepare for their defence.

Siege of Aleppo.

The emperor Heraclius had appointed one of his principal officers to be governor of this castle, (which was one of the strongest fortresses in Syria) and had also given him the command in chief of the whole country lying between Aleppo and

Division between the two governors of the place.

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

the Euphrates. That officer was lately dead, leaving two sons; who had distinguished themselves in the army. The one was called Youkinna, the other John. They both resided in the castle, and were indeed joint governors of it; but Youkinna had in general the conduct of affairs, for his brother John led a very retired life, and passed the greatest part of his time in reading and prayer; so that he seldom interfered in any matters relating to the government.

However, when he heard of the taking Kennefrin, and that the Mussulmen were preparing to push their conquests, he was one of the first to make a motion conformable to the design of the inhabitants of Aleppo. He asserted, that since they could secure themselves from the Arabians by help of money, it would be the most prudent to treat with them, and obtain the most advantageous terms they could.

Youkinna, who was of a very martial disposition, was enraged at his brother's proposal: he reproached him for his faint-heartedness, and added, by way of insult, that none but a monk would have entertained such a thought; but that for his part, far from thinking of a surrender, he was bent on defending himself to the last extremity.

Youkinna falls with success.

Upon this he forthwith assembled his forces. He even procured a considerable succour from the Christian Arabians, who sent

sent him a large reinforcement. So soon as he thought himself strong enough, he resolved to strike a bold stroke, by attacking the Mussulmen without delay. And he was the rather induced to form such a resolution, by the intelligence he received, that the enemy had divided their troops into three bodies; and he was in hopes that by making a sudden attack, he might beat one of their divisions.

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

His project was attended with tolerable good success. For at his first sally he came up with a detachment of one thousand men, which Obeidah had sent forth to view the posture of the Christians. Youkinna fell furiously on the Mussulmen, who for a while defended themselves with their usual bravery. But fortune soon declared for the governor, who was superior in numbers. The Mahometans were broke, a great number of them were cut in pieces; and probably not one of them would have escaped, had not the night put an end to the combat.

Youkinna, elated with his victory, would have rendered it compleat by pursuing the fugitives; but he was restrained by the fear of falling into an ambuscade. He forthwith called off his troops, and hastily entrenched himself on the spot where he was, with a view of beginning his march at day-break, in order to destroy the remains of the enemy's detachment.

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

He might reasonably have entertained hopes that so bold a step taken by him would have raised the drooping spirits of the inhabitants of Aleppo, and occasioned them to give over all thoughts of treating with the enemy; but at the very moment he was beating the Mussulmen, the timorous inhabitants began a treaty with them.

The inhabitants of Aleppo treat with Obeidah.

Thirty of the principal men of the city were deputed to go to Kennefrin, where Obeidah had resided for some time. When those deputies arrived at the arabian camp, they forthwith begged for quarter, as if they had been actually at the enemy's mercy. They were met at the entrance of the camp, and conducted to the general, and were greatly amazed to see how quiet the Mussulmen appeared to be; some were at prayers, and others conversing together. This so astonished the inhabitants of Aleppo, that they concluded the detachment against which Youkinna had marched out, had gotten the better: and one of them even whispered it in the ear of his companion; however not so low but he was overheard by an Arabian, who immediately carried the news to Obeidah.

That general, who had heard nothing of his detachment, was very uneasy at the information. However, he gave audience to the deputies, who told him they were come in the name of all the inhabitants of Aleppo, to treat for the city in particular; which
step

step they had taken contrary to the opinion of their governor Youkinna, whose conduct towards them was insupportably tyrannical; that they had proposed to negotiate with the Mussulmen; but he absolutely rejected their proposal, and had even made ready to march out against them.

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

Obeidah, whose uneasiness was continually heightened, imagined his troops had been worsted, and he for some time refused to treat with the deputies. He was confirmed in his refusal, by an observation which one of his chief officers made, namely, that the city and castle of Aleppo were so near each other that the inhabitants must know what had passed; that their pretended ignorance was a snare which he must take care to avoid; that they did not act sincerely, and in short, that a dangerous plot was hatched against the musfulman troops.

The deputies of Aleppo were so pressing in their entreaties, and seemed to act with such great unreserve, that Obeidah, who was easily wrought on, at last resolved to yield. Besides, he perceived his compliance might be very beneficial to the Mussulmen, as it would enable them to procure a plenty of provisions. He therefore said to such of his officers as seemed still persuaded that the deputies only aimed to impose on him, "I beg you will entertain a higher opinion of God, who will not deceive us, or give them the dominion over us."

OMAR.
 Hegyra 16.
 Ch. ær. 637.
 Terms granted to the inhabitants of Aleppo.

At last they came over to Obeidah's opinion, and a treaty was begun with the deputies. They were taxed at a certain sum, and it was also required that they should furnish the Mussulmen with provisions; that they should disclose to them all matters they should know which might be prejudicial to the interest of the Mahometans, and that they should prevent Youkinna from re-entering the castle.

The deputies accepted all these conditions save only the last. They represented that they could not engage for the performance of it, for as the governor was back'd by a large body of veteran troops, they did not think themselves strong enough to undertake any such thing against him: Obeidah no longer insisted on the article: he only made them swear to the performance of the other conditions, and then dismissed them.

On their return to Aleppo, they found the whole city in an uproar, on account of the menaces of Youkinna. At the very time he was preparing to gain fresh advantages over the Mussulmen, he received information of the step the citizens had taken. On this he quitted his design, and even retired forthwith into the castle, for fear they should cut him off from it; but when he heard the purport of the articles which the deputies had signed, he fell into the utmost rage, and resolved he would instantly attempt to prevail with the inhabitants to break the treaty.

He

He sallied out of the castle at the head of his troops, and entering the city, drew them up in order of battle, and threatened to destroy all with fire and sword, if they did not comply with his request. He first demanded that they should deliver into his hands the author of the treaty, and in the next place required that the inhabitants should march out with him to engage the enemy.

OMAR.

Hegyra 16
Ch. ær. 637.

Youkinna
would compel
the inhabi-
tants to break
the treaty.

These proposals having met with a very bad reception. Three hundred of the most refractory were slain on the spot by Youkinna's orders. John, his brother, vainly attempted to calm his rage, and fell a sacrifice to his mediation. Youkinna cut off his head with his cymetar. The massacre would have been much greater, if the inhabitants had not forthwith dispatched a messenger to Obeidah, to inform him of what passed, and to beg for succour.

He kills his
brother.

The mussulman gneral instantly sent to them the brave Khaled, who soon arrived at the city; but Youkinna was no longer there; he suspected the Arabians would be in motion, and he resolved to retreat to the citadel, for fear of being shut up in a place where every inhabitant was become his personal enemy.

Youkinna re-
tires into the
castle, where
he is besieged.

Khaled, not finding him in the city, resolved immediately to besiege the castle; but he met with a greater resistance than he expected. The intrepid Youkinna performed prodigies of valour. Khaled, provoked by so obstinate a defence,

gave

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

gave full scope to his impetuous courage; and the most heroic feats of arms were performed on both sides. In these attacks the two commanders acquired the greatest glory. For a long time it was not perceptible on which side the advantage lay; however, by degrees Youkinna prevailed, and Khaled was forced to abate the vigour of his attacks, in order to give his troops a little breathing time.

He makes several sallies.

The governor, being encouraged to find his enemy dreaded him, began to push his advantage, and went to attack him in his intrenchments. His attempt succeeded, he made a sally in the night time at the head of his bravest troops, and falling furiously on a part of the camp which he had heard was but weakly guarded, he slew about sixty Mussulmen, and took as many prisoners, whom he carried back with him to the citadel: and to shew Khaled how little he feared him, he the next morning brought out his prisoners on the ramparts, and caused them all to be beheaded in the very sight of the Mussulmen.

In a short time Youkinna struck another stroke, equally bold. His spies having brought him intelligence, that a large party of Mahometans had been foraging at a considerable distance from the citadel, he forthwith marched out with some chosen troops, and attacked the foragers; he killed about one hundred and thirty of them, dispersed the rest, and after having seized the greatest part of their beasts of burthen,

burthen, he ham-stringed the rest, and retired into the mountains, there to wait till night, that by means of the darkness he might return to the castle.

OMAR.

Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

Khaled not having received information of the evil, till it was too late to apply a remedy, resolved he would in some measure repair it, by shutting up the enemy in the mountains to which they had retired. The account which he received from some Christians in those parts, who entertained a violent hatred against Youkinna, was of the utmost service to him. These traitors shewed him a narrow pass, through which the governor was obliged to march in his return. Khaled went in order to surprize him in the defile, and a bloody encounter happened, in which both parties gave signal proofs of the most consummate bravery. At last Youkinna extricated himself from the difficulty, and happily regained the citadel; but the loss which attended that event was very little different from a defeat, part of his best soldiers being left on the spot. Besides which the Mussulmen took three hundred prisoners, whom Khaled caused to be put to death even before the governor's face.

Khaled defeats him at a pass.

After this exploit the Mahometans renewed their attacks on the castle; but the troops that remained were more than enough to baffle all the attempts of the besiegers. Khaled, vexed to find there was no probability of carrying his point by force, resolved to have recourse

Khaled renews his attacks on the castle.

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

recourse to stratagem. He caused his troops to decamp, and to march a considerable distance from the citadel, as if he had actually raised the siege. He at the same time planted several strong ambushes, in hopes the enemy would fall into them. He expected the governor would fall out with his troops to attack the Mussulmen and harraß them in their retreat; but Youkinna did not fall into the snare; he wisely kept close within his walls, and took advantage of the enemys departure to repair his fortifications.

The Mussulmen, amazed at the governor's great caution on that occasion, suspected some concealed traitor must have rendered fruitless the means they had used to surprize the enemy. For this cause they made a very strict enquiry, and at last seized a Christian, who, after using every artifice he could think of to avoid making a discovery, confessed, that it was he who informed the governor of all that passed in the mussulman camp. His sentence was soon pronounced, and he was condemned to die: but as he was a Christian, they offered him his pardon, if he would embrace Mahometism. The wretch, without the least hesitation turned Mussulman, and his life was spared.

Youkinna's affairs were in no wise damaged by the loss of the spy. That brave governor continued to defend himself so courageously, that the impatient Khaled, who was not used to meet with so obstinate a resistance, lay

lay almost five months before the castle, without being able to take it.

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

The hopes they entertained of becoming master of the citadel every day, had prevented Obeidah from writing to the Caliph. Omar being uneasy that so long a time had passed without hearing from his army, wrote to the general, and commanded him to send an immediate account of the posture of the mussulman affairs.

Omar testifies his discontent at Obeidah's silence.

Obeidah instantly returned an answer to the Caliph, and excused himself for not writing sooner, for that after he had so easily made himself master of Kennefrin, Alhadir, and Aleppo, he found his conquests retarded by a single fortress, which had till that time been defended in so resolute a manner, that he feared he should be obliged to raise the siege. He added, that it was his intention to march without delay for Antioch, and desired he would acquaint him whether he approved of such a step.

Omar received this letter at the very time when several tribes of the Arabians came in a body to Medina, to solicit leave to serve against the Christians. The Caliph, considering the account which had been just brought him, thought fit to accept their offer; he caused them to march for the army with all speed, and sent by them a letter to Obeidah. He informed the general that he was very well satisfied with the success of his forces in mastering the cities mentioned in his account;

He sends a reinforcement to Obeidah.

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

count; but that he must crown those advantages by taking the castle, of which he ordered him to continue the siege, till providence should decide the event.

Obeidah was no sooner acquainted with the Caliph's resolutions, than he issued fresh orders for resuming the siege which had been discontinued. He employed therein the newly arrived succours, and each Mussulman behaved with so much zeal and courage, as more than once to deserve praises from the general. And yet, spight of all their endeavours, things remained almost in the same situation, and no considerable advantage was gained over the besieged.

The Arabians
take the castle
by surprize.

Such was the posture of the siege for almost two months, when a Mussulman came before the general, and offered to make him master of the castle, if he might be trusted with the execution of a plan he had contrived for that purpose. The Mussulman was called Dames. He was as remarkable for his gigantic size, as for his valour and intrepidity. He had a conference with Obeidah, in which, after having related his surprising feats in Arabia, he told him that, in respect to the citadel which they had hitherto attacked with so little success, he would undertake to get possession of it in a short time, and desired only thirty men to carry his enterprize into execution.

Obeidah resolved to make the experiment: he gave Dames the thirty soldiers he required; and

and the latter, before he entered on his plan, engaged the general to raise the siege, and march away a full league from the castle. He, together with his thirty men, concealed themselves in a place which he had found out fit for the purpose. The care with which he had reconnoitred the fortrefs, added to some intelligence he had received from a grecian he took prisoner the same day, enabled him to execute his design with expedition; and as he foresaw he should carry his point that very night, he sent to Obeidah, and desired he would cause a body of horse to advance to a place he named: he cautioned him to send only troops of known courage and fidelity, and added, that the detachment must be prepared for action by the break of day, at which time he would give a certain signal which he then described.

When the night was a little advanced, Dames covered himself with a goat-skin. He came out of the place wherein he had concealed himself, and, creeping on his hands and knees, silently approached the castle, and reached the foot of the wall at that part which he knew was most unprovided of defence, and the easiest to be scaled. His men, pursuant to the order he had given them, followed him at some distance, one by one, and made use of the same precautions their leader had observed.

So soon as his company were all joined, Dames sat down at the foot of the wall, and caused a soldier to mount on his shoulders; a second got on the back of the first, and so
they

OMRA.

Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

they raised themselves to the height of the rampart. He that was uppermost, having listened some time, and not hearing the least stir in the place, leaped over the wall, and finding a centinel sleeping, he dispatched him, and threw his body over the rampart.

The Mussulman being then at liberty to act with a little more safety, they threw him up a large rope, and he fixed it to the battlements; by the help of which, the rest of the soldiers scaled the wall, and Dames was the last that mounted. At a little distance from the place where they stood, they discovered two other centinels, who seemed to be either drunk or asleep; they made sure of them with their poniards, and threw their bodies also over the ramparts.

After the centinels had been dispatched, Dames ordered his soldiers to remain quietly in the place they then were, whilst he should advance as far as possible, to view what passed in the castle. He there found all things hushed, except towards the governor's lodgings. Youkinna was drinking with his officers, and making merry on account of the Mahometans having at last resolved to raise the siege. In a short time after those troops marched away, the governor ordered that wine should be given to the garrison, and the greatest part of them being drunk, the effects of their liquor, had occasioned the guard to be very ill kept.

Dames

Dames returned to his men, and informed them of the discoveries he had made. He commanded them to remain still at their post, and said he would endeavour to approach the gate which was over against the place of rendezvous, for the succour Obeidah had promised to send him; and told him, that if the guard were no more alert there, than he had found them elsewhere, he reckoned he could master that post himself.

OMAR.

Hegyra 16.

Ch. ær. 637.

He immediately went thither, and found all things in the very posture he could wish. He stabbed some centinels who were posted at the gate, which he opened, and returned to inform his soldiers of his success. At that time day beginning to break, Dames was discovered by one of the guard, who gave an alarm. The governor having been soon informed of what was suspected, advanced in person at the head of some troops to discover the truth of what had been just related to him. The moment the centinel gave the alarm, Dames made a motion with his men to gain the port of which he had made himself master, and arrived time enough to give the signal to the expected succours. But before he could reach it, Youkinna came up with Dames and his thirty soldiers, and attacked them with the utmost fury. Those Mussulmen made a most vigorous defence; but being borne down by numbers, they must have yielded to the efforts of the Christians, had not the succour appeared.

Khaled was at the head of the troops. His presence and the numerous detachment he

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

Youkinna em-
braces Maho-
metism.

commanded, saved Dames from the impending slaughter and made the Christians lay down their arms. Youkinna, finding the citadel was laid open, and that the Mussulmen were in possession of the gates, concluded the rest of their army was not far off, and thought it would be of no avail to make any further resistance; he therefore called for quarter, and obtained it, in consideration of a proposal he made to embrace Mahomet's doctrine. Khaled was so well pleased to hear a Christian of his rank voluntarily offer to change his religion, that he gave out orders with all speed to prevent any thing being touched which belonged to him. The base example of that apostate, and the great respect shewn him by Khaled, had an amazing influence on those wretched Christians, who for the most part followed the steps of their general, and shamefully deserted their religion, for the preservation whereof they till then had fought with the utmost intrepidity.

Obeidah coming up at the same time with the rest of the army, was greatly rejoiced at a change so advantageous to Mahometism; and he testified his satisfaction by releasing all such prisoners of war as were profelites.

With respect to Dames, Obeidah bestowed the greatest commendations on that officer, and promised he would soon advance him to the highest military posts. The general was also pleased to suffer his army to abide some time in that place, till Dames and his gallant fellow soldiers were perfectly cured of the wounds they had

had received in the furious encounter which passed before Khaled's arrival.

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch.ær. 637.

So soon as they were recovered, Obeidah began his march for Antioch, in order to besiege the city. The taking that place was of so much the greater importance, as it was one of the principal cities in Syria, and was the usual residence of the emperor. The march of the Arabians was suspended on account of an observation made by Youkinna. The hatred of that renegado to the Christians now equalling the love he had borne them before his apostacy, he advised Obeidah not to depart from the place where they then halted, till he had made himself master of a castle at a little distance called Aazaz. The place was strong, and there was reason to fear the inhabitants might harass the Mussulmen during their march.

As Youkinna was perfectly well acquainted with the country, Obeidah thought fit to follow his advice; and that the more readily, as the renegado offered to undertake the surprisal of the place himself. He required only one hundred men, who were to be dressed after the grecian manner, and who were to be followed at a small distance by a detachment of one thousand horse.

The Arabians
attempt to
seize Aazaz.

He asserted, that by the help of such a disposition, his enterprize could not fail of success. He flattered himself, that as the governor of Aazaz was his near relation, it would be an easy matter for him to gain

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

his friendship ; and then he should find no difficulty to persuade him, that having embraced Mahometism only through constraint, he had always waited for a favourable opportunity to escape from the power of the Mussulmen : that an opportunity had luckily offered, and he had found means to bring away with him about one hundred Greeks, who had been taken prisoners by the Arabians. He added, that he had not the least doubt but they would permit him to take shelter in the castle, and then in the night-time they would find means to secure the centinels, and seize the gates, and that at the first signal the party of horse should come to their assistance. Such was the scheme of the base Youkinna.

Khaled, having been consulted touching this enterprize, at first made some difficulty in complying with it. He owned to Obeidah, that it would be gaining a good point, if they could take the castle by surprize ; but he much doubted whether they ought to trust Youkinna, who might pave the way to his reconciliation with the Christians, by sacrificing the Mussulmen. From such like apprehensions, Khaled was against the undertaking : however, he gave way to the general opinion of the chief officers, who affirmed that Youkinna acted with sincerity, and that an attempt to execute the enterprize ought to be made at all events.

Youkinna

Y-kinna therefore departed with a detachment of one hundred men, according to his desire. Shortly after his departure, Obeidah caused a body of one thousand horse to march after him, the command whereof he gave to Malek-Alaschtari, whom he ordered to halt in a village not far from Aazaz, and to keep his party concealed till night. At the time Malek entered the village he met an Arabian Christian, whom he caused to be seized by his men; and having examined him, he found that Youkinna's design was known in Aazaz; that the secret had been discovered by a spy which the Christians kept in the mussulman army: that the governor of Aazaz had received the news by means of a letter which the Christian had fixed under the wing of a pigeon *. In consequence of which intelligence he was sent to the governor of Arravendan, to demand succour in behalf

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

* There are many instances of this manner of conveying intelligence. Pliny relates, that they used the same means for conveying letters to Modena, when the city was besieged by Marc Antony. Syria, Arabia, and Egypt kept up the custom; and it is said that the Great Mogul breeds pigeons who serve to carry intelligence on emergent occasions. Mr. de Thou relates, that during the siege of Harlem, in 1573, the inhabitants of that city used pigeons to learn news from their allies. Those of Leyden did the same in 1575; and when the siege was raised, it is said, the prince of Orange directed, that out of gratitude, those birds should be kept in a cage made on purpose, and fed at the expence of the city. And that when they died, they should be embalmed, in order to be kept in the town-house for ever.

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

of Theodore, for so the governor of Aazaz was called.

Unluckily for Youkinna, Malek could by no means impart to him the information he had received ; so that when he entered the place, Theodore, who came to the very gates to meet him, under pretence of paying him respect, caused him immediately to be surrounded, and took him prisoner with his whole party. He then reproached him in the bitterest terms for his treachery, and even threatened he would send him to the grecian emperor, that he might avenge himself on him for the base project he had contrived.

Whilst the Greeks were rejoicing at the discovery and ill success of the enemy's design, they received a blow, which in the event caused the loss of the castle. The governor of Arravendan, who marched out to relieve Aazaz so soon as he received the news, was surprized by Malek in the night-time, and taken prisoner with his whole detachment.

The conquerors, by order of their leader, put on the garments of those they had made prisoners. Malek's design in thus disguising his men, was to make the inhabitants of Aazaz believe they were the troops which the governor of Arravendan had promised to send them ; and the better to deceive them, he made use of the very spy, who had been sent to demand the succour.

That

This spy had for a long time professed the mahometan religion : but Giabalah, of whom he was become a dependant, having revolted from Omar (as hath been already observed) he followed him with many others, and after his example embraced the christian religion. The man finding himself a prisoner to the Mussulmen, was under terrible apprehensions lest they should put in execution against him that law of Mahomet, which decrees that all such as renounce Mahometism should be put to death. He acquainted Malek with his fears, and asked him if he might not save his life by giving assurances of an unfeigned conversion.

OMAR.

Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

Malek, who was glad in that juncture to take advantage of the terror the spy was under, answered, there was one sure way to obtain his pardon ; but that it depended on a piece of service which he expected him to perform. The spy made him the fairest promises, and undertook to execute with the utmost fidelity all they should require of him. Malek then caused him to make a new profession of the mahometan faith ; after which he told the spy he must forthwith go to the governor of Aazaz, and inform him that the succour he expected from Arravendan was near at hand. The spy readily undertook the commission, and set out with all speed for the castle.

But it was then become unnecessary to make use of stratagem. The whole face of

The governor
of Aazaz is
killed by his
sons.

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

affairs in Aazaz was changed. The governor had been assassinated by his own children, who forthwith set Youkinna and his men at liberty : The cause of which resolution is hereafter briefly related. The governor had two sons, the eldest was called Leo, and the youngest Luke. Leo had for a long time been enamoured of Youkinna's daughter : he had even solicited his consent to wed her ; but Youkinna would never comply. As it was to be presumed that after the late event, greater opposition might be expected from Theodore, than from the young lady's father, he shamefully resolved out of hand to make a compact with the latter.

And this he could so much the more easily bring about, as he himself had been appointed to take charge of Youkinna and his party from the time they were made prisoners ; so that he could confer with him at his pleasure. He therefore renewed his solicitations, and promised Youkinna, that if he would give him his daughter to wife, he would instantly set him at liberty, and also embrace the mahometan religion.

Youkinna, who since his apostacy was become a most zealous Mussulman, felt such great delight at the last offer, that he readily consented to Leo's request. But he, previous to the taking any other step, was desirous to secure himself from his father's resentment ; and he filled the measure of his iniquity,

iniquity, by forming the unnatural design of assassinating him : but when he came to strike the blow, he found his brother had outstripped him. Luke, who was incited by the same motives as had stirred up Leo, formed the same project, and began to put it in execution, by ridding himself of the only obstacle which he thought capable of preventing its success.

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. æt. 637.

This horrid parricide threw all the place into an uproar. Youkinna and his soldiers, seconded by the two brothers, who had a very numerous party of friends and dependants, fell sword in hand on such of the Greeks as refused to yield to the Mussulmen. The Grecians defended themselves very courageously, and whilst they were hotly engaged, the spy came in order to have given the governor (who was no more) the delusive intelligence of the arrival of the succours they expected from Arravendan.

The spy returned with all speed to Malek, told him it was high time to advance, and that the place would be his, if he could arrive there soon enough to support Youkinna and his party. Malek forthwith began his march with his troops, and arrived just in time to secure a victory to the Mussulmen. Thus Aazaz was carried. Malek would have returned thanks to Youkinna for the success of that enterprize, but he introducing Leo, his relation, told the commandant that to his cousin they were chiefly indebted for

The Arabians
make them-
selves masters
of Aazaz.

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

for their success: and he then related to him the particulars of the whole transaction. Malek could not at first conceal the horror he felt at so unnatural a deed; but when he heard from their own mouths, that a love for the mahometan religion had been the prevailing cause of their conduct, the bigot returned thanks to heaven, and through his ardent zeal cried out, “That when God was pleased any matter should be accomplished, he himself furnished the means for that purpose.”

After the taking of Aazaz, Malek designing to join the main army, left the command of the place to Said-ebn-Amer, and appointed him a strong garrison. He then prepared to begin his march with a great number of prisoners, and a very rich booty, which he had taken from such as refused to submit.

At the very moment of his departure he received an alarm which caused him to suspend his march, though but for a very short time. Malek was informed that a great dust appeared to arise, which shewed the approach of some large detachment. He was apprehensive at first it might be a body of troops sent by the emperor to relieve Aazaz, and secure it from danger, wherefore he forthwith caused some horse to advance and make discoveries. They almost immediately returned, and informed him it was a body of Mussulmen, who had
been

been ravaging the territory of Membege*, and were marching back to join Obeidah, with Alfadi-ebn-Abbas, an officer of distinction.

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

Malek waited for him on the way, and after having congratulated him on account of his success, he related all that had passed at Aazaz, and then proposed they might march together in order to join the army. Alfadi consenting, they would have prevailed on Youkinna to accompany them; but that apostate, not having acquired as much glory as he expected to gain in the taking of Aazaz, told them he would not return to the mahometan troops, till he had signalized himself by some memorable exploit. He added, that he proposed to carry on a correspondence in the very place of the emperor's residence; that he designed to go to Antioch; and that to succeed in his enterprize, he should need only two hundred renegados whom he knew and pointed out, amongst the troops that formed Alfadi's detachment.

Youkinna designs to betray the Christians.

That leader and Malek having conferred together on Youkinna's design, thought no inconvenience could ensue from granting his request; so that the matter was soon concluded. They left him with wishes for his good success, and marched on for the arabian camp.

Youkinna and his party taking the road to Antioch, advanced within a short day's

* This city was antiently called Hierapolis.

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

march of the city, where he halted to confer with some of his friends on the plan he had formed for executing his design. They were of opinion it would be most adviseable not to go to Antioch with their whole company; for which reason Youkinna commanded the two hundred renegados to go on before him directly to Antioch, through the main road used by the caravans, and to pretend they were distressed Christians that came to beg an asylum against the Mahometans, who were in pursuit of them.

Youkinna is seized, and carried to the emperor.

For his part, he took a bye way with four of his chief acquaintance, and travelled for a considerable time without meeting the least obstacle: but at last a party of imperial troops, who were scouring the country for intelligence, having spied the five horsemen, came up to know who they were. Youkinna having acknowledged himself to be the old governor of Aleppo, they seized him and his friends, and sent them under a guard of horse to Antioch.

He regains that prince's favour.

As Youkinna's conduct was pretty well known at the emperor's court, that prince was desirous of seeing him. When he first approached, the emperor could not help giving him the plainest proofs of the grief he felt at his change of religion. But Youkinna, who had a great deal of wit, and even more dissimulation and treachery, addressed himself to the emperor in such artful terms, that he actually regained his favour.

OMAR.

Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

your. He told his former sovereign, that he ought not to be condemned on appearances; but that if they were of any weight, they made for him: that he needed no other evidence than the manner in which he had defended the citadel of Aleppo, and the boldness and steadiness with which he had opposed the resolution formed by the inhabitants of the city, of becoming tributaries to the Mussulmen. He added, that he had indeed been obliged, through fear of the enemy, in whose power he was, to counterfeit the change, for which his majesty reproached him; but that he had never entertained a serious thought of embracing Mahometism; and that at the very time he was putting on the mask, he felt an inward joy to think, that by means of such an expedient, he could preserve a life which he shortly proposed to dedicate to the defence of the christian religion, and to give his majesty the plainest proofs of his zeal and fidelity.

This artful language of Youkinna so moved the emperor, that he not only ceased to reproach him, but also admitted him to court, and soon gave him marks of the greatest confidence. That prince even thought fit to order, that a regiment should be formed to fight under his command, into which he directed the two hundred renegados to be entered, who were lately arrived there under pretence of being fugitive Christians, that

desired

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

The emperor
appoints him
to guard his
daughter.

desired to be admitted into the emperor's service.

Youkinna was not long without employment. The youngest of Heraclius's daughters being desirous of coming to Antioch to her father, she sent and intreated he would grant her a guard; and that prince thought he could not trust her, whom he held most dear, in safer hands than those of Youkinna. He therefore received his orders, and forthwith marched to attend the princess, and escort her to Antioch.

He executed his commission with tolerable fidelity. However, on their return an event happened, which might have served to shew the perfidy of the wretch, even though his party had consisted only of the two hundred renegados his accomplices: but there was a much greater number of faithful officers, and christian soldiers, which served not a little to keep him within bounds during the march.

The princess having stopped on the road in the night time, to give her guard an opportunity of taking some rest and refreshment, the centinels which Youkinna had posted in the avenues, sent to inform him, that at a little distance there was a body of mussulman troops who were greatly off their guard, and that they had even left their horses to graze in the meadows.

The officers who were with Youkinna proposed to take advantage of their situation.

They

They counselled him to secure the princess with a part of the detachment, and with the remainder to fall on those troops, of whom, according to the intelligence that had been brought, they might easily get the better.

OMAR.

Hegyra 16.

Ch. ær. 637.

Youkinna strove at first to oppose the design; but when he found his arguments were not relished, he was very forward in encouraging his troops, and making the proper disposition for an attack. However, that he might do the Mussulmen all the service in his power on that occasion, he expressly commanded they should spare their lives as much as possible. He ordered that they should only endeavour to surround and take them prisoners; with design, as he pretended, that they might afterwards serve to be exchanged for christian captives: which reason induced the imperial officers to comply with his orders.

Youkinna
strives to fa-
vour the Ara-
bians.

But these precautions became unnecessary, from a discovery which was made the instant the action was about to begin. Youkinna having sent once more to reconnoitre the detachment, word was brought that they were a body of Arabian Christians. This account being soon confirmed, all thoughts of fighting were laid aside; and on the contrary they visited and congratulated each other for their happy meeting.

The body of troops which they were on the point of encountering, had been out of
Antioch

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

Antioch for some time in order to gain intelligence. It was commanded by Haïm the son of Giabalah, who had been in the emperor's service ever since the time of his father's quarrel with Omar, for reasons already mentioned. Haïm was on his return to Antioch, after having engaged a detachment of Mahometans, which Obeidah had sent out to ravage the northern parts of Syria. The Mussulmen had been defeated, and Haïm was in possession of a large booty, besides a great number of prisoners, amongst whom was the famous Derar, whom he intended to present to the emperor as a valuable prize, alone worth a victory.

Youkinna was very sorrowful at the loss the Mussulmen had sustained. However, he artfully concealed his grief, and was even one of the first to congratulate Haïm on his success. In a short time they began their march, together with their whole detachments, for Antioch.

The safe arrival of the princess gave the emperor great satisfaction. Joy diffused itself over the whole city; and from that event they drew the most favourable presages, for the princess came to them with victory in her train.

The emperor
confers with
the arabian
prisoners.

Heraclius gave such a reception to the son of Giabalah, as the importance of his late services required. He bestowed the highest encomiums on his courage and intrepidity; and when that captain presented
Derar

Derar to him, the prince received the Mussulman with marks of distinction, and behaved very graciously to the other Mahometans who were taken prisoners at the same time with him. He had a long conversation with them touching their prophet Mahomet, his religion, and miracles. He then talked with them of Omar in particular, and asked many questions concerning the domestic life of that Caliph.

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

If a judgment may be formed of the conversation which passed between them from the particular account given of it by Alvakedi, it may be safely asserted, that the questions and answers were equally insipid and senseless *. Besides, nothing could be more mistimed

* The following may serve as a specimen of the conversation between Heraclius and the mahometan prisoners. That prince asked one of them in what manner Mahomet received inspiration: he was answered, that sometimes it was like the sound of a bell, and that sometimes the noise of it was much louder and shriller. The emperor having enquired what miracles Mahomet had wrought; they told him that Mahomet having commanded a large tree to give testimony of his doctrine, the tree forthwith moved towards him, cleaving the earth with its roots, and thrice uttered these words: "Thou art the apostle of God." Heraclius enquired further, if it were true that the Mussulmen would be rewarded ten-fold for their good actions, and the reward of evil would be only equal thereunto. They answered him that it was so. The emperor also asked many questions touching Mahomet's journey to heaven, and the conversation he had with God, and several other points of equal importance. The conference ended in the most ridiculous manner imaginable. A bishop who was present contradicted Derar: the latter gave the bishop the lie; they freely dealt out their invectives on both sides, and from

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

timed than such a conversation, where they expected the enemy to appear in fight every day.

The Arabians
seize an im-
portant post.

And indeed whilst Heraclius was losing time in listening to the idle and extravagant tales of the Mussulmen, he received advice that their troops had seized a post of the utmost importance, called the iron bridge; which being lost, there was not one post left capable to prevent the Mussulmen from marching to Antioch. The emperor's sole dependance was now on the army he had about him, which was actually a numerous and well-appointed body, and in a condition of facing the enemy: so that they resolved to give battle with all speed; on the event of which combat depended the fate of Antioch.

Giabalah pro-
poses to get
the Caliph as-
sassinated.

Whilst they were preparing to use the only means they had left for saving one of the chief cities of Syria, Giabalah came to the emperor, and made him a proposal, which in his opinion would not only secure Antioch, but also enable that prince with the greatest ease to recover all that had been lost. His project was to keep the Mussulmen at bay for so long time as would be necessary to send a trusty resolute man to Medina, who would undertake to assassinate the Caliph. Giabalah pretended to demonstrate, that the death of

words they came to blows. All this passed in presence of the emperor, and during that very time the enemy seized an important post, which opened them a way to come and besiege Antioch.

Omar

Omar would certainly raise troubles and divisions through their whole empire, and that they would be forced to recall into the center of their dominions the troops which were at a distance from Arabia; by which the Greeks would gain time to re-establish their affairs, before the enemy could be able to take the field. He added, that he was provided of a man ready to execute the design; and if his majesty would consent, he should instantly depart for that purpose.

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

The emperor was so mean-spirited as to countenance this infamous design, and immediately Wathek-ebn-Mossafer, Giabalah's confident, was sent away with all speed to Medina, to watch a favourable opportunity for assassinating the Caliph.

But the project failed and through a miracle, according to Alvakedi. Wathek having heard that the Caliph usually went abroad after morning prayer, and walked alone without the city, he watched for him in the place where he was wont to walk; and, to prevent being discovered, he ascended a very thick tree, and concealed himself amongst the branches.

The assassin
lets slip an
opportunity
of killing the
Caliph.

In a short time he saw the Caliph arrive, who after a short walk, came and laid himself down near the tree, and fell asleep. Wathek immediately prepared to seize so fair an opportunity; but the moment he got down from the tree, he saw a lion appear; and being terrified at sight of the beast, he re-

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

ascended the tree with the utmost speed, to save himself and see what would be the event.

He was greatly astonished to find that the fierce animal quietly walked round the Caliph, as it were to guard him; he even went and licked Omar's feet; and, in short, did not leave him until he awaked. Wathek, struck with awe and veneration for a prince whom heaven so evidently favoured with its protection, came down from the tree, and fell at the Caliph's feet; and after having made a full discovery of the wicked plot he had undertaken to execute, he testified his contrition, and begged his pardon, assuring Omar he would that moment embrace Mahometism. Thus, according to the arabian historian, did Omar escape the fatal snare which the treacherous Grecians had laid to take away his life.

Whilst they were waiting for the event, they endeavoured, according to Giabalah's advice, by all means to avoid an action. But at last Obeidah arriving with all his troops in the neighbourhood of Antioch, the Greeks also marched forth, and the two armies drew up in order of battle in sight of each other.

Combat between Nestorius and two Arabians.

The christian army having advanced to some distance from the enemy, the general issued from the ranks, and challenged any of the Mussulmen to a single combat. That officer who is called by writers Nestorius, had a most advantageous mein, and was equally remarkable for bravery and intrepidity. His physiognomy bespoke his good qualities; so that

it would have been dangerous to suffer any person to accept the challenge, who was not of approved valour. Dames, that brave soldier, who had so signalized himself at taking the castle of Aleppo, and who was then raised in the army, desired he might fight with the christian general, and Obeidah consented to his request.

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

The two champions advanced towards each other, and fought for some time with equal force and skill, so that no person could tell to which side victory would incline: but whilst they were hotly engaged, Dames's horse happening to stumble, Nestorius in an instant seized his adversary, and took him prisoner. He then conducted him to the camp, and ordered his attendants to bind him, and secure him in his tent.

Dames is
made prisoner.

Nestorius forthwith appeared again, and gave the enemy a second challenge, which was accepted by a Mussulman named Dehac, who had gained a great character amongst the Arabians. He perfectly well maintained it on that occasion. It must be confessed he did not obtain any advantage over Nestorius, but it was a great matter to be able to stand his ground before so formidable an enemy. The combat lasted a long time, and at last the two champions, being equally fatigued and out of breath, mutually agreed to give over, and retire to their respective camps.

This kind of justing, the event of which nearly concerned each army, caused some

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

disorder amongst the Christians. The greatest part of them broke their ranks the better to view the combat. In the stir that was made all over the camp on this occasion, Nestorius's tent, where Dames was strictly guarded, was soon overturned. Curiosity had prevailed on the general's attendants to quit the tent, inso-much that only three were left to watch Dames; which however might have sufficed, for they had taken care to bind that officer very securely.

He gains his
liberty

These servants finding themselves at a loss to set up the general's tent, which they were willing to do with all speed, for fear of being punished for not preventing the accident, they desired Dames to assist them in erecting it. He seemed very ready to lend his assistance, and they instantly unbound him. But the moment he was freed, he made those unhappy wretches feel his prodigious strength, and killed them all three: after which he took a grecian habit from out of Nestorius's wardrobe, and mounting one of that general's horses, he rode away to the mahometan army.

Youkinna
saves the lives
of the maho-
metan priso-
ners.

The escape of that prisoner made a great noise amongst the Grecians. The emperor himself was so enraged at it, that in his fury he ordered Derar and the rest of the mussulmen prisoners to be beheaded. Happily for them, Youkinna, who had gained a greater ascendancy than ever over the emperor, so strongly intreated for them, that he obtained their pardon. He remonstrated to Heraclius, that it

would

would be an unpardonable cruelty in Christians, to act in so rigorous a manner towards unhappy prisoners, who in the main were not criminal: that besides, such a conduct would irritate the Mahometans, and occasion them for the future to give no quarter to the Christians who might fall into their hands.

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

These remonstrances had their effect. The emperor not only spared the lives of his prisoners, but, at Youkinna's request, he gave them better treatment than they could expect. They almost enjoyed full liberty; however, under the inspection of Youkinna, who was charged by the emperor to have an eye over their conduct. Thus that imprudent prince accelerated his own destruction, by placing an unlimited confidence in a traitor, who only waited for a favourable opportunity to put his treacherous designs in execution.

The correspondence which that renegado continued privately to carry on with the musulman army, was doubtless the cause that Obeidah contented himself with keeping his troops drawn up ready for action, without undertaking any other enterprize than sending out detachments, which daily committed the greatest ravages in the neighbourhood of Antioch. The peasants, who were thereby ruined, came in crouds to take refuge in the city, which they filled with fear and terror, by the accounts they gave of the cruelty of the Mahometans.

At this melancholy news the emperor was seized with the utmost grief, which the

OMAR.
Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

The emperor,
terrified by a
dream, with-
draws to Con-
stantinople.

wicked Youkinna artfully cherished, in order to discourage that prince, and to make him fearful of the event of a battle. Heraclius, quite confounded, unhappily had a dream, which terrified him to the greatest degree. He thought his crown fell off his head on the ground, and that a man violently tumbled him down from his throne. There needed no more to make him form the desperate resolution of quitting Antioch, and flying to Constantinople, which he put in execution the next day. He privately went to an adjoining port, where he embarked, and departed with all the sail he could make.

So precipitate a departure increased the fears of the inhabitants. The chief officers vainly endeavoured to cheer up the people; for as the sovereign did not think himself safe in Antioch, they gave the city over for lost. Those, however, who were charged with the conduct of the state, took the best measures to rouse up their dejected spirits: and the troops seeming inclined to exert themselves in doing their duty, it was at last resolved to hazard a battle.

Though the christian affairs were so greatly on the decline, yet they might have founded some hopes on their troops, who seemed ready to do their utmost in support of their religion and liberties, and for the preservation of the most considerable place the emperor was possessed of in that province. But at the very time the onset was given, and whilst the

the Christians were fighting with the utmost intrepidity which men could shew, when animated by despair, Youkinna determined the victory in favour of the Mussulmen.

OMAR.

Hegyra 16.
Ch. ær. 637.

The traitor who had been appointed by the emperor to guard the prisoners, secretly furnished them with arms, and charged Derar to fall out with his companions upon the Christians, whilst they should be engaged with the Mahometans; and assured him that the moment he appeared, he would be seconded by a great number of lords, who were determined to embrace the mahometan doctrine.

Youkinna
betrays the
Christians.

All which was carried into execution during the very heat of the battle. Vain were all the efforts which the Christians made: being attacked in the rear, whilst they faced their enemy, they saw a part of their leaders shamefully abandon them in order to yield. From that moment they gave over all thoughts of defending themselves; and the inhabitants being informed by the fugitives of the loss of the battle, formed a resolution on the spot that they would not wait till they were besieged. They with all speed sent deputies to Obeidah, to treat about the surrender of the place: and articles having been agreed on, the mussulman general, at the head of his troops, made his triumphant entry into Antioch the twenty-first day of August, in the seventeenth year of the Hegyra, and the 638th of the Christian æra.

Hegyra. 17.
Ch. ær. 638.

Antioch sur-
renders to the
Arabians.

Thus

OMAR.
Hegyra 17.
Ch. ær. 638.

Thus that opulent, fair, and famous city, which had for so long time flourished under the Persians, the Seleucians, the Romans, and the emperors of the Greeks, at last fell a prey to the Mahometans.

Obeidah
causes his
troops to leave
Antioch.

Obeidah caused his troops to decamp shortly after he had taken possession of the place. The fears that wise general felt for the Musulmen, lest they should be tainted in such an abode, made him resolve to send them away with all speed. And in fact, the fertile situation of Antioch, the soft sweetness of the air, joined to the voluptuous, disorderly, and luxurious manners of its inhabitants, could not but enervate the courage, and utterly destroy the spirit of modesty, simplicity, and disinterestedness which had been the distinguishing characteristics of the Mahometans; and which, since their arrival in Syria, had been visibly on the decline. They were become proud of their advantages; they took a pleasure in adorning themselves with the rich spoils of the Grecians; and there was cause to fear they might be debauched by their intercourse with strange women, and still more by the pernicious example of the Greeks.

Those wicked Christians, who were equally corrupt both in heart and mind, had for a long time lost all love, and even all respect for religion. They made an open profession of Christianity, it is true, but were Christians only in name. They gave themselves up to the commission of every crime, and did not perform

perform a single duty: and, blinded by their ill habits, which plunged them into a stupid insensibility, they thoughtlessly went on in the commission of their crimes, and seemed to be left unpunished, only that they might be a shame to the very Mahometans.

OMAR.

Hegyra 17.
Ch. æt. 638.

Obeidah therefore caused his troops to march with all speed from such dangerous quarters, and issued orders that they should encamp at a great distance from Antioch. He then dispatched an express to the Caliph with the news of his conquest, and an account of the measures he had judged it advisable to take for restraining the soldiery, who seemed inclined to fix in Syria, and who had even asked leave to marry the women of that country. And in the close of his letter he requested the Caliph would send him orders for his operations during the rest of the campaign.

Obeidah consults Omar on several matters.

Omar received the dispatches at the very time he was setting out for Medina accompanied by the wives of the prophet, to perform a pilgrimage to Mecca. He forthwith stopped, and opened Obeidah's letter. When he had perused it, he fell prostrate on the ground, and returned thanks to God for the signal favours he had shewed to the Mussulmen; he immediately answered Obeidah's letter; and having congratulated him upon his success, he took notice of the general's having caused the troops to quit Antioch.

It seemed that the Caliph had then forgot with what rigour he had behaved to the Mahometans

The Caliph's answer.

OMAR.
Hegyra 17.
Ch. ær. 638.

hometans the preceding year ; particularly how he had rent in pieces their filken garments, with which they had adorned themselves at the time Jerusalem was taken. The language he made use of to Obeidah on that occasion was widely different : he disapproved of the general's severity, and told him he should have permitted the Mussulmen to tarry some time in Antioch, in order to have made themselves amends for their fatigues and hazards. He added, that the faithful were not interdicted a due use of the good things of this world ; and he gave free leave to such as had no settlements in Arabia, to fix themselves in Syria, and take wives there, and even to hire as many women slaves as they should think fit, in proportion to their means. He concluded his letter with an order to push on his conquests in the hill country.

The Mussul-
abate of their
first ardour.

Obeidah was amazed to find the austere Omar consent to such relaxations of the antient discipline, as might in time insensibly destroy it, and render his subjects effeminate. That general even began to perceive that the ardour of his troops was diminished ; and he had a fresh proof of it on account of the expedition they were to undertake for making conquests in the hill country, according to the Caliph's commands. Obeidah, that he might the better discover the dispositions of the Mussulmen, declined naming such as he thought proper for the undertaking : he proposed the
thing

thing in general, and asked who would take on him the command.

OMAR.
Hegyra 17.
Ch. ær. 638.

The event justified Obeidah's suspicions touching the delicious and luxurious abode of his forces in Syria. The Arabians having been informed that the hill country, though not far off, was of very difficult access and passage, on account of the ice and snow with which it was almost continually covered thro' the whole year, not a person voluntarily offered. The general repeated the same proposal, but even the bravest amongst them stood silent. At last one appeared, and accepted the command. He was called Meisfarah-ebn-Mefruh. Obeidah accepted his offer very gratefully; he openly commended his zeal, and delivered to him a black flag, with this inscription on it: "There is but one God; and Mahomet is the apostle of God."

The general put under his command a numerous detachment, and Dames, who accompanied him, headed one thousand black slaves. Those troops underwent great hardships so soon as they were advanced amongst the mountains. In short, it was going from one extreme to another; the climate of Syria was warm and pleasant, whereas that of the hill country was piercingly cold. However, they made their way through the passages to the mountains with great resolution; and indeed they met with no other obstacle than the intemperature of the climate, and the badness

Obeidah
sends troops
to conquer
the mountain-
ous country.

OMAR.
Hegyra. 17.
Ch. ær. 638.

badness of the roads. The few villages they found in their way were quite abandoned. The peasants, who had received intelligence of their march, fled for refuge to distant parts; and they only met with one, whom they seized, in order to get intelligence.

The seizing the peasant was a happy incident to the Arabians: since the information they received from him probably prevented them from being cut in pieces. They learned that an army of thirty thousand men was lying at no great distance from them; to which the prisoner added, that it would be safest for the troops to remain on the spot they then occupied; for if they advanced further, they would be without shelter, or other means to secure their flanks, and would on that account find it impossible to defend themselves against so numerous a body; whereas the post they were then in possession of was provided of the former, as well as other conveniences: that they must not indeed expect to gain any advantage in case of their being attacked, but that at the same time none could be gained over them.

That unhappy Christian was very ill rewarded for his information and advice. The Arabians, according to their custom, would have persuaded him to embrace Mahometism; but he would not listen to their solicitations. Even the fear of death was not capable of making him dissemble; inasmuch that the
Mussulmen

Mussulmen, enraged at his courage and constancy, cruelly took away his life.

OMAR.

Hegyra 17.
Ch. ær. 638.

In pursuance of the peasant's advice, Meissarah intrenched himself in the mountains, and kept on the defensive. He at the same

The Arabians
are surrounded.

time dispatched a courier to inform Obeidah of his situation, and demanded a speedy reinforcement. In the mean time the Grecians having received intelligence that a body of the enemy was in their neighbourhood, they marched up, encamped at a small distance from the Arabians, and effectually surrounded them; but they could gain no further advantage, because the Mussulmen kept close within their strong intrenchments. However, some smart skirmishes passed, in which the Greeks took many prisoners, and amongst others an intimate friend of the Caliph, named Abdallah-ebn-Hodafah; an officer greatly distinguished on account of his personal merit, and still more for the honour he had of being cousin-german to Mahomet.

The Mussulmen being shut up in that narrow passage by so considerable a body of forces, would have been constrained to yield, either through famine, or for other reasons, had not Obeidah with the utmost speed sent them relief. At the very time that general received Meissarah's letter, Khaled returned with an immense booty, which he had brought away from some towns lying beyond the Euphrates,

Advantage
gained by the
Mussulmen
beyond the
Euphrates.

OMAR.
Hegyra 17.
Ch. ær. 638.

phrates, whither he had been sent. After having subdued part of that country, he left strong garrisons in the places, and came in person, as well as to give an account of his victories, as to offer his service for any new conquests.

Khaled
marches to the
relief of the
Arabians in
the moun-
tains.

The arrival of that brave Mussulman caused a universal joy in the arabian camp. Obeidah, who was highly pleased at his returning victorious, proposed that he should add to his late noble exploits the glory of disengaging his brethren, who were surrounded by the Greeks in the hill country. The indefatigable Khaled immediately began his march with a detachment of three thousand men, which were speedily followed by two thousand others, headed by Aiad-ebn-Ganam.

The Greeks
retire.

The Grecians soon received intelligence of the reinforcements that were coming to the relief of the Mussulmen; and whether they thought them to be more numerous than they really were, or whether the bare name of Khaled, whom the Christians so much dreaded, had inspired them with terror, the Mussulmen, who till that time had been closely blocked up, were amazed one morning to hear the news, that the Greeks had retired in the night-time, in so precipitate a manner, as very little differed from a flight; they even left behind them their tents and great part of their baggage.

The Arabians
re-join Obei-
dah's army.

Khaled was highly vexed at their retreat: he depended on signalizing himself in that expedition,

pedition, and at least of retaking the prisoners the Grecians had made. He even would have marched out forthwith in pursuit of the enemy, in order to harass them in their retreat: but Meissarah, and the rest of the chief officers, who had found an opportunity to reconnoitre the ground in the neighbourhood of their post, represented to Khaled that he would expose himself to manifest danger by advancing any further; and that it would be most prudent at that time to give over an undertaking, which was like to have been attended with the most fatal consequences: Khaled, therefore, was obliged to comply with their opinion, which was to make their retreat in good order, and join Obeidah's army.

OMRA.

Hegyra 17.
Ch. ær. 638.

That general wrote to the Caliph to inform him of what had passed, as well as of the improbability of ever surmounting the difficulties in passing the mountains. He also mentioned the prisoners, and in particular Abdallah, and told him it was a matter of importance not to suffer that officer to continue long in the hands of the Greeks, who, glorying in such a prize as in a conquest, had sent away that Mussulman in great haste to Constantinople, for fear he should be retaken.

So soon as the Caliph received the news, he dispatched a letter to Heraclius to demand Abdallah. The letter was couched in these terms;

OMAR.

Hegyra 17.
Ch. ær. 638.Letter by
which the Caliph demands
Abdallah's
liberty.

“ In the name of God most merciful ; praise be to God, who is the Lord of this world, and of that which is to come ; who has neither equal, wife, nor son*. May his blessing be on his apostle. Omar, the servant of God, to Heraclius, emperor of the Greeks. On receipt of this letter, do not fail to send back to me the mussulman prisoner now in your power, and who is called Abdallah-ebn-Hodafah. If you comply, I shall have hopes that God will lead you in the right way : but if you refuse, I shall send against you men, who are not diverted by trade and merchandize from the remembrance of God. Health and happiness be upon every one that follows the right way.”

The emperor must have been touched to the quick by the arrogant stile of this letter. However, far from complaining of it, he speedily complied with the Caliph's request ; and not only sent home the prisoner, but also made Omar a present of a very valuable diamond. The Caliph, disdaining to keep the gift, caused the jewel to be sold, and sent the produce of it to the public treasury. He had a long conference with the prisoner touching the state of the emperor's court. Abdallah related to him how strongly he

* This was a reproach levelled by the Caliph against the Christians, on account of the mystery of the holy trinity, and title of mother of God, which they gave to the virgin Mary.

OMAR.

Hegyra 17.

Ch. ær. 638.

had been solicited to change his religion ; but that neither promises nor threats had been able to shake his resolution. He added, that the emperor had caused him to be very closely confined, without suffering any thing to be provided for him to eat and drink, save the flesh of hogs and wine, both of which were prohibited by the law of Mahomet ; but that he had not touched either. And having taken no food during three days, Heraclius, who was astonished at his constancy, ceased to make any further attempts.

When the Caliph wrote to the emperor to demand the release of Abdallah, he dispatched a messenger at the same time to Obeidah, with orders to push on the conquests of the Mussulmen. He no longer insisted on their invading the hill-country, which he found was an enterprize of very great difficulty and hazard ; but he pressed the general speedily to take such measures as he should think proper for subduing the remainder of Syria.

Obeidah being thus invested with unlimited authority by the Caliph, resolved to give some time for refreshment to his troops, who were very much fatigued. However, that the mahometan conquests might not be delayed, he sent a courier to Amru-ebn-Alas, ordering him to go upon action with the army under his command.

OMAR.

Hegyra 17.
Ch. ær. 638.Conquests of
the Arabians
in Palestine.

Amru was then in Palestine, where he had brought several towns under obedience of the Mussulmen. So soon as he received Obeidah's orders, he began his march towards Cæsarea, where it was reported Constantine, the son of Heraclius, had posted himself with a considerable army. But when he entered that territory, he found he could not possibly advance without giving battle, Constantine having strongly intrenched himself, and seeming ready to dispute the passage. Amru therefore pitched his camp at a little distance from that of the prince, and made preparations for attacking the enemy without delay.

It was soon evident that though Constantine still boldly stood his ground, he had no intentions to risk a battle. He first attempted to surprize the Mahometans; for which purpose he sent an Arabian Christian to reconnoitre the posture and strength of the enemy. The arabian spy, who was a thorough master of his trade, slipped into the camp, and was for several days a witness of all that passed there. But some person having accidentally trodden on his garment, so that he was like to fall, he inadvertently swore by Jesus Christ: on this the Mussulmen found he was a christian spy, and forthwith put him to death.

Amru having been informed of it, was vexed they had acted so precipitately. He reproved the officers who were present at
that

that juncture, saying, they had taken from him the only means which providence had afforded, of becoming acquainted with every step taken by the Christians. He then caused proclamation to be made through the whole camp, that all such spies as might be thereafter discovered, should be brought before him.

OMAR.

Hegyra 17.
Ch. ær. 638.

In a short time a grecian priest came to the arabian camp, and demanded audience of the general. He was forthwith introduced to Amru, and informed him that Constantine was desirous of treating with him; for which purpose he requested that some trusty person might be sent in order to confer with him. Amru resolved to go himself, that affairs might be the sooner dispatched.

The grecian prince gave the mussulman chief a very polite and honourable reception. The first compliments being passed, he offered him a chair; but Amru refused it, and according to the mahometan custom, sat cross-legged on the ground, with his sword and spear lying in his lap: And a very extraordinary conference passed between them, if we may credit the account given of it by an arabian writer.

Constantine in the first place remonstrated that the Arabians and Greeks were in the wrong to make war against each other, for they were brethren. "As they differ so widely in point of religion, how can they

Conference
between Con-
stantine and
Amru.

OMAR.
Hegyra 17.
Ch. ær. 638.

be brethren?" replied Amru. "Besides," added he, "what evidence can be produced of the kindred between the Coreſchites and the Grecians?" The prince, in order to prove it, made a long harangue, in which he deduced the pedigree from the days of Adam.

Amru answered, that it was true the Arabians and Greeks were both deſcended from Abraham and Noah: that Noah had divided the land between his three ſons; that to Shem he gave Syria, and the adjacent countries; and the Arabians being of the race of Shem, were conſequently his right heirs. "But however," added he, "the earth is the Lord's, and he gives it as an inheritance to thoſe he chuſeth. We are his ſervants; he hath given it up into our hands; and we only re-enter into poſſeſſion of our antient inheritance, to which we have a better title than you. We have long enough dwelt in our ſcorching and barren deſerts: we will now poſſeſs this delightful country, and make a full conqueſt of the land; for it is no more than equitable that we ſhould enjoy it in our turn."

The Muſfulman then directing his diſcourſe to the Grecians who were preſent, told them, that they had no other means left to ſecure their abode in that country, but the embracing Mahometiſm, and paying tribute to the Unitarians; or deciding their quarrel by the ſword. "I point out to you," ſaid

faid he concluding his difcourfe, “the way to
 fafety; but ye are rebels, as your father
 Efau was. You own us to be your kins-
 folks; but we will have no affinity with you,
 whilft you continue in infidelity. We are
 descended from Ifhmael. Our prophet Ma-
 homet was infpired by the angel Gabriel, to
 afford us the light of his holy truth, to
 guide us in the practice of that doctrine,
 which God himfelf was pleafed to dictate.”

OMAR,
 Hegyra 17.
 Ch. ær. 638.

Having faid thefe words, Amru arofe:
 and thus ended the conference, without the
 leaft hopes of an accommodation. After
 which each fide made ready to come to a
 decifive battle.

When a hiftory offers to the reader’s view
 two numerous armies ranged in battalia, he
 has great reason to expect he is about to be
 informed of the good or bad conduct of
 the refpective generals who commanded and
 led them on to battle. He expects to fee,
 as on a plan, the difpofitions and feveral mo-
 tions of thofe great bodies, whose refent-
 ment is ftirred up againft each other; and
 in fhort, to know what particular acci-
 dent or feat inclined the victory to one of
 the parties. But no information of this
 kind can be gained from the arabian hifto-
 rians; or at leaft, Alvakedi, who hath hi-
 therto ferved me as a guide in my narration,
 hath not deigned to afford us the leaft infor-
 mation in that refpect. For after giving an
 account of a combat, or rather a kind of

OMAR.
Hegyra 17.
Ch. ær. 638.

justing between two or three champions, according to him the Christians fell into disorder, were routed, abandoned their camp and baggage, and fled. Examples of a similar kind have already appeared in this history; so that our surprize will not be so great at meeting with the same disappointment on this occasion.

Single combat
between a
Christian and
several Ara-
bians.

The two armies being therefore drawn up in line of battle, and facing each other, an officer of the grecian troops advanced up to the Mussulmen, and asked if any of them would fight him in single combat. Several of the Mahometans having earnestly solicited for the preference, it was granted to a young Arabian, who, burning with zeal for the mahometan religion, had listd to serve in Syria, with a view to gain profelites, or acquire a crown of martyrdom. But he was too young to cope with such an antagonist; his strength was by no means answerable to his courage and zeal: so that the grecian officer soon got the better of him, giving him a blow which laid him dead on the spot.

Two or three other Mussulmen then offered themselves, and successively met with the same fate. At last Sergiabil appeared, and he was the last that fought. The assault was like to have been fatal to the Mussulman. As he was very devout, and a rigorous observer of all the precepts of his religion, he had to so great a degree ema-
ciated

ciated and weakened himself by fasts and watchings, that it was not probable he could long hold out against the christian officer. In fact, Sergiabil was unhorsed at the first onset, and his adversary had dismounted, and was preparing to put him to death; when a horseman from the grecian army issuing out of the ranks, galloped full speed, and came up time enough to cut off the christian officer's head. He then rode off to the mussulman army, to which he reconducted Sergiabil. He confessed he had been one of those who had formerly risen up against Mahomet*. He owned, that the fear of being punished for his crime, had induced him to take on in the service of the Christians, where he had long waited a favourable opportunity to recover the favour of the Mussulmen. He added, that he hoped the service he had done would intitle him to a pardon. He was forgiven, and afterwards employed in the service of the nation.

OMAR.

Hegyra 17.
Ch. ær. 638.The christian
officer is killed.

The death of the grecian officer spread terror and dismay amongst Constantine's

The Christians quit their
colours.

* That Mussulman was called Tuleihah-ebn-Chowailed. He was held in so great detestation by his countrymen, for having dared to stand up against Mahomet, that when Amru sent him to Omar with a letter of recommendation, the Caliph was seized with horror at the sight of him. But the lively repentance of Tuleihah, joined to the important service he had done in saving Sergiabil's life, perfectly restored him to the Caliph's favour, who pardoned his crime, and even gave him a command in the army.

troops.

OMAR.
Hegyra 17.
Ch. ær. 638.

troops. A great number of them being resolved to quit their colours, drew away with them many of their comrades. Such as had the courage to stay, had not however bravery enough to face the enemy. They pretended they were unable to hold out against the Mussulmen, whose strength augmented each moment; and they resolved, without orders, to regain their camp, and there strongly intrench themselves.

Constantine
retires to Cæ-
sarea.

However, they made no long stay there, Constantine having resolved to make his escape to Cæsarea the following night; and the general's example drew on the multitude, so that the next day the Greeks abandoned their camp, and went to seek for shelter, together with their prince.

Amru having instantly sent the news of these transactions to Obeidah, the general ordered him to march with all speed to Cæsarea, where he proposed soon to join him, that they might together undertake the conquest of Tripoli, Acre, and Tyre.

Youkinna
seizes Tripoli
for the Maho-
metans.

But at the very time Obeidah was issuing these orders, he received intelligence that Youkinna had saved him much labour, by having gotten possession of Tripoli. The general, highly pleased with the news, forthwith sent Khaled to him with a detachment, concluding he might stand in need of relief to maintain possession of the place.

Khaled arrived very opportunely. Youkinna had scarce enjoyed for a moment the
pleasure

pleasure of his new conquest, when he saw many ships sail into the port, laden with provisions and arms for Constantine's troops, whose shameful retreat was not then known at court. Youkinna was present at the disembarkation, and treated the captain and other officers as if they had been friends. He was, however, a little fearful of being discovered in the event; but to his great joy he was informed of Khaled's arrival. That reinforcement calmed all his fears. He took the officers of the ships prisoners, and having caused the greatest part of the provisions to be carried into the city, he intreated Khaled to take charge of the place, whilst he should make the same attempt on Tyre, as had succeeded on Tripoli.

Youkinna therefore went on board the ships he had seized, and arrived at Tyre: And when he entered the port, he sent word to the governor, that he was bringing refreshments for his troops, and those of Constantine. On that account they gave him a very gracious reception, and provided a magnificent house in the principal square for him and nine hundred men of his train. But a christian officer there, happening to know Youkinna, advised the governor to be on his guard; who took such prudent measures, that with very little stir he caused Youkinna and all his men to be seized by the garrison, and put in irons. As to those who were on board the ships, though he intended

OMAR.

Hegyra 17.
Ch. ær. 638.

Youkinna, attempting to take Tyre, is discovered and seized.

OMAR.
Hegyra 17.
Ch. ær. 638.

intended they should undergo the same fate with their companions, yet he did not immediately secure them: and at that very time an arabian detachment appeared in sight of Tyre, which seemed to threaten the place. The governor having caused those troops to be reconnoitred, intelligence was brought him that they were Arabians, commanded by Yefid-ebn-abi-Sofian, one of the best generals amongst the Mussulmen.

The governor finding that the enemy's detachment was not very numerous, resolved to attack them briskly, and try to defeat their troops before they could receive any reinforcement; but first he caused Youkinna and the other prisoners to be brought into the citadel, and gave them in charge to a Greek named Basil.

Basil sets him
at liberty.

That Grecian was a traitor, who had long intended to desert to the Mahometans: but he was desirous of previously striking some notable blow, which might give him weight at his first appearance amongst them. The present juncture seemed favourable to his design, which he imparted to Youkinna; and as a proof of his zeal for Mahometism, he forthwith set that renegado and his whole train at liberty.

The Tyrians
are forced to
yield.

So soon as Youkinna was freed from his chains, he sent advice of his delivery to such of his men as were on board the ships, and bid them come and join him at a place he appointed. He afterwards sent the same information

formation to Yefid, who was then engaged with the governor. This news gave fresh courage to the Mussulmen: they stood all the attacks of the Tyrians with the utmost bravery; and at last victory openly declared in their favour by help of a motion which Youkinna made. He marched out of the place, and attacked the Tyrians in the rear, whilst the Arabians employed them in front. By means of this motion the governor's detachment was almost entirely cut in pieces. The conquerors then entered the city, and massacred all the inhabitants that fell in their way: but at last their fury abated, and they gave quarter to such as offered to embrace Mahometism.

The taking of Tyre threw the inhabitants of Cæsarea into the utmost consternation, who thought they saw the Mussulmen already at their gates. However, they took some measures for defending themselves against so formidable an enemy; but a new event frustrated all their designs. The faint-hearted Constantine, terrified at the loss of Tyre, and without so much as once reflecting on the strength of Cæsarea, the number of its forces, or the great influence his presence must have in such a juncture, meanly considering only his own safety (as if the enemy had been actually on the point of entering the city) he by stealth quitted the place with his family, and with all speed reached

OMAR.

Hegyra 17.
Ch. ær. 638.Constantine
flies to Con-
stantinople.

OMAR. reached a port, where he embarked for
Hegyra 17. Constantinople.
Ch. ær. 638.

Cæsarea
yields to the
Arabians.

This shameful desertion of Constantine determined the fate of Cæsarea. The inhabitants, who had no thought of sacrificing themselves, in order to preserve the place for a prince who had just so basely abandoned them, unanimously resolved to capitulate. They therefore sent word to Amru, that they were ready to surrender, and to give up to him at the same time all that appeared to be Constantine's particular property. As to themselves, they demanded security for their lives and fortunes, which was granted them in consideration of two hundred thousand pieces of silver. Amru then entered the place, and took possession of it in the Caliph's name.

The Arabians
seize the other
towns of
Syria.

After this event, not a city was left that dared to refuse opening its gates to the Mus-fulmen : so that they were soon masters of Ramlah, Acre, Joppa, Ascalon, Gaza, Sichem or Nabolos, and Tiberias in Palestine, and the cities of Beirout, Jabalah, Zidon, and Laodicea, on the coasts of Syria. And so rapid was their conquest, that it was more like a journey than a military expedition.

Hegyra 18.
Ch. ær. 639.

Death of several maho-
metan offi-
cers.

All these advantages were shortly crossed by a terrible scourge with which that province, and all the adjacent parts were afflicted. The plague laid waste almost all Syria, and carried off so many people, that the year in which it happened was called

“ the

“ the year of destruction.” Obeidah, Ser- OMAR.
giabil, Yefid, and many other of the chief Hegyra 18.
mahometan officers, died of that distemper. Ch. ær. 639.
The famous Khaled had the good fortune
to escape the common calamity ; but he did
not long survive his brave companions in
arms, who expired before his eyes. He
died about three years afterwards. Histo-
rians have not taken the least notice either
of the manner of his death, or the place
where he died*.

Immediately after Obeidah's death, Amru Amru takes
took on him the chief command of the the command
army, and wrote at the same time to the of the army.
Caliph an account of the havock which the
pestilence had made amongst the troops and
officers : And as his waiting in Syria for
orders must have been attended with the
greatest danger, he informed Omar, that he
would begin his march for Egypt, accord-
ing to the former plan, and he desired the
Caliph would acquaint him with his will
touching that enterprize.

Omar was sensibly grieved at the loss the
state had sustained by the death of those
great men, whom the plague had carried off.
Having bestowed on their memory all due
praises, he conferred with the chief of his
council touching the expedition into Egypt.
They were unanimously of opinion that the
enterprize should be carried into execution,

* Our author is mistaken herein, though none of the ara-
bian writers fix it with any certainty ; some saying it was at
Hems, others at Medina.

OMAR.
Hegyra 18.
Ch. ær. 639.

Othman
strives to pre-
vail on Omar
to deprive
Amru of the
command.

How the Ca-
liph behaves
in that re-
spect.

but were divided in sentiments touching who should be general. Whether Amru's exploits had drawn on him the envy of his countrymen; or whether they did not think him capable of conducting so important a design, Othman, who had the greatest influence on the mind of Omar, strove to persuade him not to continue Amru in the command of the army.

But the Caliph differed with him in sentiments: however, as he was unwilling to disoblige Othman, he made use of an expedient which fully answered his purpose. He wrote to Amru, not actually to deprive him of command, but ordered him to return with the troops, in case he should be in Syria when the letter reached him: and if he was on the frontiers of Egypt (which there was reason to apprehend he might be, as he had time enough for that purpose) in such case, Omar added, he should continue his march.

These are the terms in which the Caliph wrote to him: "If this letter comes to your hands before you have entered Egypt, return the way you came; but if you have entered that country at the time the courier shall deliver it to you, continue your march with the blessing of God; and be assured that if you want supplies, I will not fail sending them to you."

It is highly probable that the Caliph, at the same time he sent the letter, informed

Amru

Amru how he would have him act, that all might succeed to their mutual wishes. In fact, when that letter arrived, Amru was still in the territory of Syria. That general told the courier, that as he had not then time to peruse his letters, he must accompany the army, and he would dispatch him the first leisure moment. Amru caused his troops to march with double speed, and advanced towards the frontiers of Egypt. So soon as he was arrived there he halted, and having assembled his chief officers, he opened the Caliph's letter, and publickly read it: and then, as if he had not known what country they were in, he caused some of the inhabitants to be brought before him, of whom he asked, to what province the spot they were on belonged? The inhabitants having answered that he was in Egypt, "If so," said the general briskly to his officers, "we shall continue our march."

OMAR.
Hegyra 18.
Ch. ær, 639.

He accordingly marched on, and came before a place called Pharma, to which he laid siege. He made himself master of it in about a month's time, and afterwards marched to Mefrah, where he was stopped during almost seven months. The besieged defended themselves with amazing bravery: insomuch that Amru, despairing ever to take the place without a powerful supply, wrote to the Caliph, and begged he would without delay send him a reinforcement, according to his promise.

Conquests of
the Mussul-
men in Egypt.

Siege of Mef-
rah.

OMAR.
Hegyra 18.
Ch. ær. 639.

The Caliph immediately sent away some large detachments, which arriving in a short time at Amru's camp, raised the courage and hopes of the besiegers. However, notwithstanding that succour, the place would still have held out a long time, had it not been for the treachery of the governor.

He was named Makaukas, was of the sect of the Jacobites*, and consequently an enemy to the catholic Grecians, Besides, as he had injured Heraclius by detaining the whole tribute of Egypt, of which he was appointed receiver, and had refused to send that prince the smallest part of it in the time of need, when the emperor's affairs were insensibly declining in Syria, he was justly apprehensive that he should be one day severely punished, if the Grecians should get the better of the Mahometans. He therefore resolved to take that opportunity of depriving the emperor of the town, and of giving it up to the Mussulmen, on such terms as should be most to his own advantage.

The arrival of the reinforcements which had been sent to Amru, gave Makaukas an occasion to exaggerate the strength of the besiegers. He told the Greeks it would be impossible to hold out any longer, and that for his part he thought the most prudent

* The Jacobites are a sect of orientals, who acknowledge but one nature in Jesus Christ. They are so called from one James Bardai, who gave rise to that error in the sixth century.

step they could take would be, to abandon the citadel, and retire to a little island, lying in the midst of the Nile, between Mefrah and the opposite bank, to which place he led the way and was followed by all the Coptics*, as well as by a part of the other grecian troops: but a great number of them remained, who were bent on using their utmost efforts to defend the castle.

OMAR.
Hegyra 18.
Ch. ær. 639.

Few persons now but entertained the strongest suspicions of the governor's treachery, and were firmly persuaded his design was only to weaken the garrison, and thereby facilitate the taking of the citadel. And he accordingly entered into a negotiation after he had quitted the place by sending a deputation to Amru, to know why he came and attacked men against whom he had no just cause of complaint: he likewise represented to the general, that he would run great risques by persisting in his enterprize, for as the inundation of the Nile was at hand, the camp of the Mussulmen, and the ground all round about it would soon be laid under water, and they would inevitably fall into the hands of the Grecians. He added, that

* The name of Coptics, Cophtes, or Coptes, is supposed to be derived from the Greek *αἰγυπτιος*, Egyptian. They were the natives of Egypt, and called so to distinguish them from the Greeks, who had been fixed there ever since the time of Alexander the Great. After that people had embraced Christianity, the errors of the Jacobites crept in amongst them, and the Coptics embraced it. But the Greeks continued to be Catholics. The latter were driven out on the abovementioned occasion, and the Coptics made terms with the Mahometans, and still inhabit that country.

OMAR.
Hegyra 18.
Ch. ær. 639.

he was however inclined to listen to terms of accommodation, if the general would send a person duly authorized to treat with him.

Amru immediately dispatched to the governor a trusty man named Abadah, who carried to him the terms. That envoy made the same proposals as the Mussulmen were wont to offer their enemies; which were either to turn Mahometans, to become tributaries, or finally to refer the quarrel to the decision of the sword.

Makaukas answered, that the Grecians would never submit to either of the two first proposals; and as to the third, he believed they were not strong enough to make head against the Mussulmen; for neither he nor his Coptics would lend them any assistance, and that he had resolved, together with those of his party, to pay tribute; and as to what might befall the Greeks, he should not trouble himself about it.

Abadah being returned, and having given an account of his negotiation, Amru easily saw through the governor's design. The step he had taken in leaving the citadel, and carrying with him a great number of his troops added to the great indifference he shewed in respect to what concerned the Grecians made the mussulman general form a resolution to renew his attacks on the castle of Mesrah.

The affair was decided at the first assault. The Mussulmen, being sure that the garrison

of the place was greatly weakened, planted their ladders, and scaled the walls with wonderful activity. One amongst them named Zobeir, was the first that entered the place, and he immediately crying out, Allah Acbar, (according to custom) the rest ran in crouds to second him. And whilst they were pouring into the citadel, a great part of the garrison quitted it with the utmost precipitation, to reach the Nile. They went on board such barques as they could find, and sheltered themselves in the island. All such as remained in the castle were either put to death or made prisoners.

OMAR.
Hegyra 18.
Ch. ær. 639.
The Arabians
take the castle
of Mefrah by
assault.

The Grecians, who had retired to the island where Makaukas was, then perceived, but too late, that they were victims to the treacherous dealings of that governor. They would willingly have revenged themselves for his villainous behaviour, but they dared make no attempt on him, on account of the great number of Coptics he had about him. Besides, they did not think it safe to tarry any longer with him, for fear he should basely give them up to the Mahometans. They therefore re-embarked, and passing to the other side of the river, they retired to Keramol, a place situated between Mefrah and Alexandria.

In making so speedy an escape they acted very prudently; for the perfidious Makaukas treated with the Mussulmen shortly after they had seized the castle. He in the first place

The Arabians
grant terms
to Makaukas,

OMAR.
Hegyra 18.
Ch. ær. 639.

stipulated, that his person and treasures should be safe; he also interposed in behalf of the Coptics, and it was that they should pay a yearly capitation tax of two ducats. Makaukas required to be comprehended in that tax on the same footing with the rest of the Coptics, and to be always considered as one of their body. In respect to the Greeks, he declared he would have nothing in common with them, for he was neither of their country nor of their religion. He confessed that fear had induced him for a long time to dissemble; but that since a fair opportunity offered, he took a pleasure in making known his sentiments; and finally, he intreated the mussulman general never to make peace with the Grecians; but on the contrary, to pursue them till he had utterly rooted them out.

All these conditions were granted by Amru; but he added, that the Coptics should be obliged to maintain at their own charge, during three days, all such Mussulmen as should come amongst them; that they should repair the public bridges and highways; that they should find quarters for the troops in their houses, and should take care to provide the mussulman army with provisions and ammunition, for which they should be paid.

Taking of
Keramol.

These several articles having been agreed to on both sides, Amru forthwith decamped to march in pursuit of the Greeks. He went and attacked them in Keramol, where they defended themselves for the space of three days with

with great resolution ; but at last the place was carried, and a great number of Grecians lost their lives. However, many of them had the good fortune to escape the conqueror's sword, and fled for refuge to Alexandria, which city was in a very short time besieged by the Mussulmen.

OMAR.
Hegyra 18.
Ch. ær. 639.

The siege was long and bloody. The Grecians repelled their attacks with the utmost intrepidity, and made frequent sallies, in which neither of the parties could boast of any advantage, for a great number of men were killed on each side. The Mussulmen thought they had gained a considerable point by making themselves masters of one of the main towers which defended the place, but they were dislodged from it after a very warm engagement, which had like to have been attended with fatal consequences.

Siege of
Alexandria.

The brave Amru, who exposed himself like the meanest of his soldiers, was present at the attack of the tower ; and when he had gained possession of it, he stood the shock of the Grecians with admirable valour : but they so closely pressed him, that he could not disengage himself ; so that he was taken prisoner, together with Moslemah-ebn-Makhaleh, one of his chief officers, and a man named Verdan, one of the general's slaves, who had always fought by his master's side.

Amru and
Makhaleh
are taken
prisoners.

Those prisoners were immediately brought before the governor, who, happily for the two first, did not know them to be persons of distinction.

How they
regain their
liberty.

OMAR.
Hegyra 18.
Ch. ær. 639.

distinction. However he entertained some suspicions; when having asked what the Mussulmen meant by running about the country in such a manner, and disturbing their neighbours, Amru answered with great spirit, that it was their design to make other nations embrace Mahometism, or force them to become tributaries.

This bold language having given the governor room to imagine that he who used it was no mean person, he spoke to some of his attendants to cut off his head. As the order was given in the Greek tongue, which Verdan understood, that slave had the presence of mind to contrive a stratagem which saved his master's life: he gave Amru a box on the ear, and told him in an affected rage, that he was very bold to speech it in his presence. As Verdan probably appeared to be what he really was, the governor fell into the snare: he thought the prisoners were only common soldiers, and that the slave might have the command over the others by virtue of his being a kind of petty officer, which his vanity induced him to shew. That mistake caused the governor to change his mind, and he revoked the orders he had given.

Moslemah, upon this addressing himself to the governor, in his turn made use of another stratagem, which was also attended with the greatest success. He told the commandant that the city would be soon freed from the Mussulmen, for he had it from good authority

rity that the Caliph had sent the general an order to raise the siege, and that, instead of attacking him sword in hand, Omar was preparing to send him an embassy, consisting of persons of distinction, with whom an amicable treaty might be entered on, touching the disputes between the two nations. He added, that if they might be set at liberty, and permitted to inform their general of the kind treatment which the Grecians afforded their prisoners, he dared assure him that the accommodation would be entered into the sooner, and in a very advantageous manner to the Christians.

OMAR.
Hegyra 18.
Ch. ær. 639.

The governor, who in all probability was a man easily to be imposed on, simply believed all Moslemah had told him, and consented to set them at liberty. The Mussulmen were no sooner out of the place, than they began to cry aloud, Allah Acbar. The whole mussulman army instantly resounded with the same joyful acclamation. The Grecians who were on the ramparts, were apprehensive that so universal a joy at the return of three prisoners, denoted that there must be amongst them a person of chief note. They were soon informed of the truth, and the governor, to his great mortification, found, that he had had the mussulman general in his hands, and ridiculously suffered himself to be deceived by a discourse void of all probability, and on which he ought
at

OMAR. at least to have bestowed a little reflexion,
 Hegyra 18. before he had released the prisoners.
 Ch. ær. 639.

Taking of
 Alexandria. The return of the general raised the cou-
 rage of the Mahometans. They resumed
 Hegyra 19. their attacks, and made them so frequently,
 Ch. ær. 640. and with such vigour, that the Christians,
 whose troops daily diminished, soon slack-
 ened in their defence. At last, after a siege
 of fourteen months, which cost the Maho-
 metans almost three and twenty thousand
 men, they made themselves masters of Alex-
 andria.

The massacre was not considerable at the
 time they entered the city, because the Greeks,
 who had formed a resolution of abandoning
 the place, had taken proper measures for
 flying with safety. Some made their escape
 by sea, and others fled far into the country,
 and took shelter in strong holds, where they
 could not easily be surprized.

So soon as Amru had taken possession of
 Alexandria, he judged it necessary to pursue
 the flying Grecians, and destroy as many of
 them as he possibly could; for he conclud-
 ed that if they had time to secure them-
 selves, they would again fall on the Mus-
 fulmen, and so keep them continually under
 alarm.

The general seeing the city was totally
 abandoned, thought it needless to leave a
 strong garrison there, whilst he went in
 pursuit of the Greeks; so that he appointed
 but a small number of Mussulmen to guard
 the

the place, and with the rest of his troops followed after the unhappy Christians.

OMAR.

Hegyra 19.
Ch. ær. 640.

But during his absence, the Grecians, who had embarked to make their escape by sea, being on the coast near Alexandria, were informed that the garrison of the place was very weak. They therefore forthwith sailed back to the port of that city, and having made a descent under cover of the night, they killed the centinels, entered the place, and put almost all the Mussulman troops to the edge of the sword.

The Greeks
re-take Alex-
andria.

Some Arabians who had the good luck to escape the slaughter, ran with all speed to Amru, and told him the misfortune which had just happened. The general returned on the spot, in hopes of taking it by storm; but he found the Christians lodged in the castle, where they had strongly intrenched themselves, so that he was forced to besiege the place again. They now made as vigorous a defence as they had done during the first siege, but it was not of so long continuance. The Greeks having for some time opposed the enemy with the most heroic bravery, found means to escape from the castle, and having reached the port, they again went on board their ships, and left the Mahometans in quiet possession of Alexandria. Amru tarried there some time to put the place out of the reach of insult, and thereby to deprive the Greeks of all thoughts of making any further attempts thereon.

The Arabians
seize it a
second time.

At

OMAR.

Hegyra 19.
Ch. ær. 640.The city is
saved from
being plun-
dered.

At the time Alexandria was taken, the behaviour of the mussulman troops was very remarkable; the general had prohibited all plundering, and the soldiers so punctually obeyed, that not the smallest thing was touched. However, when they re-took the city, they earnestly solicited Amru to revoke his orders, and permit them to enjoy the advantage they had merited by good services; but the general having commanded them to wait for the decision of the Caliph, to whom he had wrote on that account the moment he became master of the place, there was no more stir, and each man readily submitted.

The Caliph speedily returned an answer. Omar, having expressed the highest satisfaction at Amru's conduct, returned him many thanks for the great care he had taken to restrain the soldiers from plundering. He desired he would continue his vigilance to prevent any spoil, and at the same time he charged him to gather up all the money, jewels, and household furniture, and to make out an account thereof, to the end the same might be applied to the use of the Mussulmen, and for defraying the expences of the war.

The taking of Alexandria decided the fate of all Egypt. That vast country having submitted to the Mahometans, furnished them with an immense tribute. Each inhabitant, whether rich or poor, was taxed at two ducats a year. Such as were possessed of lands, farms, or vineyards, were moreover obliged to pay a sum in proportion to their annual income.

come. Thus Egypt, which was very populous, filled the mahometan treasury with riches; which, to men who lived with the greatest austerity and oeconomy, was an inexhaustible fund *.

OMAR.

Hegyra 19.
Ch. ær. 640.

In fact the Mussulmen, whether in peace or war, lived at a very small expence, and at all times with the utmost frugality. They were strangers to the use of wine and exquisite dishes; their usual drink was water. What they ate was extremely plain, and commonly their favourite diet was milk, rice, and fruit. Their expence in cloathing was also a trifle; insomuch that their treasures swelled even in time of war. For the sums they levied on the new conquered country were more than sufficient to pay the forces.

Frugality of
the Mahome-
tans.

Amongst the riches found at Alexandria was a precious treasure, which however the Mussulmen did not think worthy their notice. It was an immense collection of books, known almost over the whole world by the name of the Alexandrian Library †. The Arabians, who

They burn
the Alexan-
drian Library.

* The yearly revenue was computed at twelve millions of ducats.

† Ptolomey Soter, when he founded a museum or academy at Alexandria, at the same time began to form a library, which he placed near his palace in a building called Bruchion. That library was considerably increased by his successors. In the time of Philadelphus, his son, it amounted to one hundred thousand volumes, and soon afterwards to four hundred thousand. The number having still increased to three hundred thousand more, the latter were placed

OMAR.
Hegyra 19.
Ch. æt. 640.

who at that time had not applied themselves to the sciences, did not consider the good use they might have made of so prodigious a collection of books.

A famous disciple of Aristotle, called John, and surnamed the Grammarian, was highly pleased to find that the library was left untouched. The great indifference shewn by the Mahometans to so noble a body of learning, inspired him with a design of obtaining it from Amru, who had a very great value for him.

That general was not learned, but he had an understanding and natural taste, which excited his curiosity for pleasing and useful knowledge; insomuch that when he met with men capable of instructing him, he took a pleasure in conversing with, and asking them many questions. Of all those that remained in Alexandria, he took most delight in John the grammarian: he scarce passed a day without seeing him, and seemed al-

placed in the Serapion, a temple so called from the statue of Serapis, which Ptolomey had caused to be brought from Sinope. During the war made by Cæsar on the Alexandrians, the Bruchion was burned, together with the four hundred thousand volumes it contained, but the Serapion was preserved. Cleopatra, as it is generally believed, caused to be brought thither from Pergamus the library which Marc Antony made her a present of, which augmented it with two hundred thousand volumes; to which great numbers were afterwards added, which rendered the last library more numerous than the first. It had received damage more than once in the time of several revolutions, but had always recovered its former splendor, in which it continued till the time of the arabian war, when it was totally destroyed.

ways

ways to take greater pleasure in his conversation.

OMAR.

Hegyra 19.

Ch. ær. 640.

John, emboldened by the great regard and familiarity with which the general honoured him, took the liberty at last to mention the library, on which he had set his heart; and told him, that having observed the great indifference shewn by his countrymen to those books, which indeed could be of no use to the Arabians, as it was absolutely necessary they should be perfect masters of the several languages in which the authors had wrote, in order to understand them, he therefore begged the favour that he would make him a present of them. He added, that he should not have been so imprudent as to make such a request, if he had thought the library could be of the least use to the Mussulmen.

Amru, who had a sincere friendship for that learned man, answered with great kindness, that he heartily wished the books had been at his own disposal; in which case, he would have presented them to him with the greatest readiness; but that he could not take such a step without the Caliph's directions. However he bid him not be disheartened; told him he would forthwith write to Omar, and so state the matter, that he should expect to receive a satisfactory answer. He therefore dispatched a letter, in which he highly exalted the merit of John, and assured the Caliph he was perfectly deserving of such a present.

The

OMAR.
Hegyra 19.
Ch. ær. 640.

The great precaution of Amru caused the destruction of that magnificent library. Omar fixed its fate by his answer to the general, which was couched in these terms: “ As to the books you mention, either their contents do agree with what is written in the book of God, (the Alcoran) or do not agree: if they do agree, then the Alcoran is sufficient, and those books are useless; if they do not agree, you must destroy them.

On receipt of the Caliph's letter, his orders were immediately put in execution, and the books were condemned to the flames. A judgment may be formed of their number, by the time it took up to burn them. Amru having caused them to be distributed over the whole city to heat the baths, which amounted to five thousand, they were full six months in consuming them. This was the second time Alexandria had seen committed to the flames a most valuable literary treasure, the loss of which was regretted even by the very Arabians, when a taste for letters prevailed amongst them.

Famine in
Arabia.

Shortly after that fatal expedition, Amru received letters, by which he was informed that a terrible famine raged in Arabia, and began to be felt in Medina and the neighbouring parts. The Caliph commanded him to send a full supply without delay.

The land of Egypt being extraordinary fertile, Amru met with no great difficulty in complying with the Caliph's orders. So soon

as he received the news, he sent away a great number of camels loaded with corn; the next day the same number set out, and so every day: insomuch that from Alexandria to Medina, which stood almost one hundred leagues distant from each other, there was a continual string, which began at the former and ended at the latter.

OMAR.

Hegyra 19.
Ch. ær. 640.

By those means Arabia was again blessed with plenty. But as the journey was long and difficult, Amru contrived a way to render it shorter and less expensive. He had been informed that a roman emperor * had formerly caused a canal to be digged at Mesrah, which reached to the Red Sea, and he undertook to repair it. In that great work he employed part of his troops, and in a short time made a very commodious channel, which he rendered navigable by turning into it the water of the Nile. They gave it the name of “Khalige Emir al Moumenin;” that is to say, “the canal of the commander of the faithful.” It was of singular use both to the Egyptians and Arabians, on account of its convenience for importing and exporting provisions and merchandize. It now no longer subsists. It is said the Turks let it run to ruin when they gained possession of Egypt.

So soon as time and season allowed, Amru made war in Africa, whilst the other generals marched into Asia to make conquests there. Both those countries were almost intirely

Hegyra 21,

22.

Ch. ær. 641,
642.

* Trajan.

OMAR.
Hegyra 23.
Ch. ær. 643.

brought under the mussulman yoke, and the mahometan religion soon prevailed in those extensive regions.

Omar is assassinated.

Omar did not long enjoy the pleasure he must have felt on account of the rapid conquests of his forces. He was unhappily assassinated by a Persian named Firouz. The wretch was slave to a Mussulman, who having condemned him to pay two pieces of money each day because he refused to embrace Mahometism, the slave made his complaints to Omar, and begged he would order an abatement to be made in his tax, which was exorbitant considering his condition.

The Caliph asked him how he got his livelihood, and the slave having answered him that he was a master of several trades, namely, of a carpenter, a carver, and that he was even a good architect; Omar told him the tax was not too heavy, and that he might well pay it out of his gains. He dismissed him with that answer, and told him at parting, that he intended to build some windmills, and would employ him about the work.

The slave disregarding the Caliph's promise, and his mind being soured with the thoughts that he must still pay the tax, resolved to be revenged on Omar for the unfavourable answer he had given him; and in a few days, having entered the mosque whilst the Caliph was reading the morning prayer, he wounded him in three places with a knife, and the wounds proved mortal.

The

The Mussulmen, who were about Omar, instantly laid hands on Firouz to apprehend him, but he being young, strong and active, found means to get clear of them: he wounded thirteen, seven of whom died almost upon the spot. In short, they could not secure the desperate assassin, until they had thrown a garment over his head, which prevented him from making any further defence. At last they got him into their custody; but as they did not take timely precaution to disarm him, he killed himself with his own knife.

OMAR.

Hegyra 23.
Ch. ær. 643.

Omar did not expire 'till three days after he had been wounded. In that interval, his friends strongly pressed him to nominate a successor, but he would give them no positive answer. He only said, "If Salem were now alive, I would chuse him perferably to any other." The chief of the Mussulmen renewed their entreaties, and proposed to him several persons; he refused to chuse any of them, on pretence of some defect which rendered them unfit. In this manner did he exclude Ali, who might have laid claim to the sovereignty, as being cousin and son-in-law of Mahomet. But Omar did not think him either prudent or steady enough for so weighty a charge. Othman-ebn-Affan was also rejected, because the Caliph thought he shewed an unwarrantable partiality for his friends and relations.

Omar refuses
to nominate a
successor.

As no person had thought of proposing his own son to be his successor, it was imagined

OMAR.
Hegyra 23.
Ch. ær. 643.

the Caliph waited for such an offer before he disclosed his resolution. But when they mentioned it to him, he gave no other answer than that it was sufficient for one person in a family to be accountable for the conduct and administration of the Mussulman affairs.

Electors
named to
chuse a Caliph.

Omar having thus passed some time without seeming willing to come to any resolution, finally declared his will. He appointed six electors, whose names follow, Othman-ebn-Affan, Ali-ebn-Abi-Taleb, Tellah, Zobeir-ebn-Abdallmotaleb, Abdarrahan-ebn-Auf, and Saed-ebn-Abi Wakkas. Those electors were persons of the greatest distinction in Arabia, had lived with the prophet, and been his most faithful companions.

Omar's eulogium.

Soon after this nomination Omar died, being sixty-three years of age, and having reigned ten. He was extremely regretted by the Mussulmen, whom he had governed with great moderation and prudence *. Having been always accustomed to

* His administration of justice was very impartial, without regard to the quality or condition of the person accused. His decisions were strictly according to the sense of the Koran, and the traditions of Mahomet, in whose days he gave a signal proof of his sense of the duty of inferiors to their governors, on the following occasion :

An obstinate Mussulman having a dispute with a Jew, the cause was brought before Mahomet, who decreed in favour of the latter : but the Mussulman refused to abide by the sentence, and insisted that the cause should be re-heard by Omar, who was then only a private man. The parties came before Omar, and found him at the door of his house. Each party having

to a plain and private life, the lustre of a throne wrought not the least change in his manner of living. His cloathing, his lodging, his diet, were a plain proof how much he slighted pomp and ornament. Water, barley bread, and rice, were his usual drink and food. No Mussulman was ever a more zealous observer of his religion, or more liberal to the needy. Every Friday he used to distribute among them large sums of money. It hath been already observed that Abubecre chose the same day to bestow his alms; but he proportioned his charity to the necessities of the receiver, whereas Omar gave his without distinction to all such as were in distress. He held it as a maxim, that virtue would be sufficiently rewarded in the next world; but that in this world, riches ought to be employed only in supplying our temporal wants.

In respect to his outward person, historians describe him as being tall and well-shaped. His complexion was brown, and his head a little bald. His look was mild,

having opened his case, and Omar having been acquainted with the decision already made, and desired to make a fresh decree, he bid them stay, and said he would decide their business in a moment. He withdrew into the house, and returning with a drawn cymetar, at one blow smote off the Mussulman's head, saying with a loud voice, "See what they deserve, who will not acquiesce in the determination of their judges." On which account Mahomet called him Farouk; intimating, that he knew as well how to distinguish between truth and falsehood, justice and injustice, as to separate a knave's head from his body. D'Herbelot Biblioth. Orient.

OMAR. and at the same time very noble. Upon the
 Hegyra 23. whole, his physiognomy, which was ma-
 Ch. ær. 643. jestic, impressing fear and respect in the
 minds of men, gained him the affections of
 all that lived under his authority.

Origin of the word Saracen. At the time of this Caliph I shall give an
 account (however without warranting it) of
 the origin of the word Saracen, or rather
 the general use of that denomination, under
 which the arabian Mahometans are known
 in history.

Opinions are much divided touching the
 etymology of that word. Some authors
 have asserted that the Arabians so called
 themselves, with a view to propagate a be-
 lief, that they descended from Sarah, Abra-
 ham's wife. But it does not appear they
 ever entertained such a thought. They them-
 selves said they proceeded from Ishmael,
 the son of Hagar, servant to that patriarch;
 and they even called themselves Hagareens
 and Ishmaelites.

Others derive the word Saracen, in Latin
 Saraceni, from the arabian verb Scharaca,
 which signifies Oriri, "to arise;" because
 those people lie to the east; and for that rea-
 son the western nations give them the name
 of orientals.

Others having considered that the word
 Sarak signifieth in the arabian tongue a rob-
 ber, and according to the Hebrew, barren-
 ness and poverty, they suppose that the name
 Saracen was formed of it; a denomination
 which

which is fuitable enough to a nation which stood in need of every thing, and lived only on what they forcibly took from their neighbours.

OMAR.

Hegyra 23.
Ch. ær. 643.

And some, who approve of that etymology, tell us, that the nation in general always retained the name of Arabians; and that the appellation of Saracen was given to the people of a certain district, who were actually robbers and thieves.

But the nation in general becoming a terror to all other people, on account of the ravages and incursions they made and committed, first on their neighbours, and afterwards on the most distant provinces and kingdoms, western writers have indifferently given all that people the name of Saracens.

I shall therefore often make use of that denomination in the sequel, in order to comply with the language of historians, who have commonly employed it. Besides, it will be very serviceable in distinguishing the arabian Mahometans, to whom it is proper, from the arabian Christians, who were always at war with them.

Hegyra 23.
Ch. ær. 643.

O T H M A N.

The THIRD CALIPH.

Assembly to
chuse a Caliph.

SO soon as the death of Omar was made public, the electors convened to chuse a successor. In the first council which was held for that purpose, Abdarrahan made two proposals to his colleagues. The first, that the person who should vote for himself might be excluded from the Caliphship. He in the next place offered to renounce the pretensions he might have to that dignity, if they would leave the sole choice of a Caliph to him.

Both these proposals were accepted by all the electors. Ali alone made some difficulty in submitting to them; for as he had already twice missed of being elected to that dignity, he was apprehensive that the resolution they had just taken would again deprive him of it. However he came over to the rest, for he plainly saw his opposition would be of no avail against a majority of votes.

Abdarrahan being therefore invested with full power to name a Caliph, directly turned his thoughts to Ali. He had a private conference with him, and offered to appoint him to that office, if he would promise to govern according to the doctrine contained

contained in the book of God*, and to undertake nothing of importance without consulting the elders.

OTHMAN.
Hegyra 23.
Ch. ær. 643.

How passionately fond soever Ali was of the Caliphship, he openly declared his sentiments. He answered, that he would readily conform to all that was written in the book of God; but he would not be bound to regulate all matters of government after the opinion of the elders. Upon the receipt of that answer Abdarrahan resolved he would lay aside all thoughts of Ali. Othman, whom he afterwards visited on the same account, was more pliable; he submitted to all the conditions that were offered, and was consequently elected.

Ali refuseth
the Caliph-
ship.

Othman
elected Ca-
liph.

Othman began his reign by making war against the Persians, who in the end were totally subdued, and forced to submit to the mahometan power.

That war was a continuance of one, which had been prosecuted with great vigour under the preceding Caliph. When Omar ascended the throne, he sent troops into a district of Chaldea, called Persian Irak, because the Persians remained in possession of it. That Caliph, having resolved to make himself master of the country, raised a numerous army, which he sent out under the command of Abu-Obeid, and appointed Almothana, Amru, and Salit, to serve under him as lieutenant-generals.

The Arabians
subdue Persia.

* The Alcoran.

OTHMAN.
Hegyra 23.
Ch. ær. 643.

Obeid marched towards the Euphrates, and having laid a bridge over that river, he passed it in sight of the Persians, who made no motion to prevent him. They did not begin to act, until they saw him draw up his army in order of battle, after he had passed over; at which time they briskly harassed him, and killed a great number of his men. But the general having soon given the signal, fell furiously on the Persians, and made them give ground. The latter assumed fresh courage, rallied, returned to the charge, in their turns broke the Mussulmen, and totally routed them. Obeid having been killed in the action, Almothana, his first lieutenant, used amazing efforts to get clear of the enemy. At last he gained the bridge, and crossed the river with a small number of Mussulmen. He forthwith caused the bridge to be cut down to secure his retreat, and encamped at a little distance from the Euphrates, in a post where he strongly entrenched himself, in order to wait in safety for the succours which he had intreated the Caliph to send him without delay.

Omar soon sent him a large body of forces, whereby he was enabled again to take the field; and he forthwith ravaged all that part of Irak which lieth near the river Euphrates.

Arzemidokht, who was then queen of Persia, sent out some troops to repel the Arabians.

Arabians. The two armies engaged; and after a dispute, in which fortune seemed for a long time to be doubtful, at last the Persian general was killed, and victory fell to the Mussulmen.

OTHMAN.
Hegyra 23.
Ch. ær. 643.

The Persians imputed the loss of that battle to their queen, whom they afterwards deposed, and gave the crown to a young prince of the royal family called Izdegerd, which descended from Cefroes, the son of Hormisdas. During the reign of this prince they suffered greater misfortunes than they had felt under the government of Arzemidokht. The armies he sent forth against the Arabians were worsted in several encounters, and escaped a total defeat only by taking shelter in strong holds, which the enemy dared not to attack.

The conquests which the Mussulmen were making in other provinces, prevented them from sending forces into Irak; so that for some years the Persians remained undisturbed. But at the very time siege was laid to Jerusalem, Omar having commanded one of his most famous captains to begin fresh hostilities in Persia, the conquest of that country was greatly forwarded by that expedition. Saïd-ebn-Abi-Wakkas (for so the general sent by Omar was called) made so powerful an irruption into the Persian dominions, that he forced his way to the very capital, of which he made himself master, and carried away the treasures, and all the riches,

OTHMAN.
Hegyra 23.
Ch. ær. 643.

riches, which they had been amassing ever since the reign of Cosroes.

The mussulman general still pushing on, was stopped in his career by a numerous army, which marched up to give him battle. The Arabians were again victorious on this occasion; and king Izdegerd, finding his affairs were in a very dangerous situation, took shelter in Ferganah, a strong place, where he remained in quiet during the last years of Omar's reign.

But so soon as Othman ascended the throne, he sent out a strong army, which enabled his generals speedily to invade such parts of Persia as had not been conquered. The Mussulmen in a short time made themselves masters of several places which covered the fortress, to which Izdegerd had retired. That monarch, finding he was so warmly assailed, had recourse to a Turkish prince named Tarkan, who came at the head of a strong army, and joined him. The king soon quarrelled with that prince, and insulted him. In consequence of which he retired, without any thoughts of revenge. But a Persian of distinction named Mahwa, who had long entertained a hatred against Izdegerd, took that opportunity to put in execution a most cruel piece of revenge. He applied to Tarkan, and spoke to him so warmly against the king, that he roused up his anger, and prevailed on him to join in his destruction.

Thus

Thus whilst the unhappy Izdegerd was driven to be a kind of wanderer in his own dominions, to save himself from the pursuit of the Arabians, who infested the whole country, he fell a sacrifice to those very persons from whom he might have expected succour, had his conduct been agreeable to the rules of prudence and discretion.

OTHMAN.
Hegyra 23.
Ch. ær. 643.

Tarkan being fired by Mahwa returned into Persia, and meeting the king with some troops, he attacked and entirely defeated him. Mahwa pursued the shattered remains of his forces, cut part of them in pieces, and every where sought after Izdegerd, that he might glut his revenge. That prince having got clear of the runaways, made up to a mill, where he hoped to have escaped the search of his enemies: but the miller standing on terms with the prince, before he would suffer him to enter, some horsemen of Mahwa's party espied him, and slew him on the spot*.

On the death of that prince, a final end was put to the empire of the Persians, and

* The circumstances of that prince's death are differently related in the *Bibliothèque Orientale*, written by D'Herbelot. It is there said that Izdegerd, having fled to a river which was not fordable, offered a rich bracelet to a waterman to carry him over the river. The boatman answered, that he would have nothing to do with his bracelet; but if he carried him over, he would have four oboles†. During the dispute, he was overtaken by the horsemen that pursued him, and slain.

† An obole is a coin, in value the sixth part of a farthing.

OTHMAN.
Hegyra 23.
Ch. ær. 643.

all the provinces thereof soon fell under the dominion of the Mussulmen. That great revolution happened in the 31st year of the Hegyra, in the 651st of the Christian æra, and about the seventh year of Othman's reign. It will appear I have a little anticipated that event. But I chose to take this method, in order to avoid breaking the thread of my narrative, which I must have done, had I related the facts in the order of time they happened : and for the same cause I deferred relating so much of those transactions as passed during the reign of Omar, to the end the whole might be comprehended under one view.

Conquests of
the Mussul-
men in Africa.

At the time the Persian war was resumed under Othman, the Saracens had carried on their conquests upon the coasts of Africa, from Egypt to the streights of Gibraltar : but they sometimes met with disappointments and misfortunes, which were occasioned by the Caliph's imprudent conduct.

Othman's bad
conduct.

Omar formed a right judgment of Othman's disposition, when he refused to name him for his successor, on account of the partial regard he saw Othman bore to his own family. And in fact, the undue preference he gave to his relations soon raised great disorders in the state, which occasioned his own destruction.

He was so imprudent as to recall Amru, to whose valour they were indebted for their conquests

conquests in Egypt: and he gave the government of that country to Abdallah-ebn-Saïd, who had no other merit than being his foster-brother.

OTHMAN.

Hegyra 23.

Ch. ær. 643.

This change had like to have cost the Saracens the greatest part of their conquests in Egypt: Amru had gained the love and esteem of the Egyptians. He had artfully conformed to their manners and genius; and had so won upon them, that when some slight emotions arose from time to time, he pacified them, rather by means of the affection they bore to him, than through their fear of his power.

As Abdallah possessed neither the same prudence nor bravery that Amru was master of, the people soon rated and esteemed him accordingly. They murmured at the change; some malcontents even began their secret practices; and at last they sent word to the emperor, that if he would cause a body of troops to march speedily into that country, he might soon recover the possession thereof, and in particular of Alexandria; for the retaking of which they offered to be responsible.

Hegyra 24.

Ch. ær. 644.

The malcontents deliver up Alexandria to the grecian emperor.

So pleasing a piece of news roused up the courage of the Grecians. The emperor soon raised considerable forces, and a numerous army shortly landed on the coasts of Egypt, whence they marched directly to Alexandria. There needed no extraordinary efforts to
take

OTHMAN.
Hegyra 24.
Ch. ær. 644.

take the place. On the appearance of the grecian army, such of the inhabitants as had formed the plan of the revolution, shewed themselves, and prepared to execute their design. Abdallah, who was incapable of conducting a state even in time of the most profound peace, was quite confounded amidst those commotions, and the city was taken.

Hegyra 25.
Ch. ær. 645.

The loss of Alexandria threw the inhabitants of Medina into consternation. Othman being then thoroughly sensible of the fault he had committed in laying aside Amru, thought he could make no better amends for it than by restoring that general without delay to the government of Egypt.

He therefore departed forthwith from Medina with fresh troops, and marched on with the utmost expedition. His arrival gave great pleasure to such of the Egyptians as had no hand in the conspiracy, and they openly declared for him so soon as he came amongst them.

However, notwithstanding the inclination the people bore him, the retaking Alexandria was of necessity a work of time. The Grecians made a brave defence, and fought so desperately, that the Saracen general, enraged by their resistance, swore, if he was victorious he would dismantle the place, and lay it so open on all sides, that it might be entered without the least difficulty.

The

The general soon had it in his power to be as good as his word. The Saracens stormed the town, and at first made a terrible slaughter of the garrison and inhabitants, which Amru could scarce put an end to, even by exerting his utmost authority. However, at last he prevailed, and saved the lives of the greatest number. He even commanded that the flying enemy should not be pursued too closely; and by that means the grecian general, with the remains of his troops, had time to reach his ships, on board which he embarked with the utmost precipitation, and fled to Constantinople. Thus Alexandria was again brought into the power of the Mussulmen, after it had remained about a year in the hands of its antient possessors.

OTHMAN.

Hegyra 26.

Ch. ær. 646.

Amru retakes

Alexandria,

and disman-

tles it.

Amru caused the forts and ramparts of the city to be demolished, according to his oath: since which time that city, so renowned on account of its founder, Alexander, and of other illustrious princes its sovereigns, who had left many noble monuments of their grandeur, is now dwindled into a kind of town, which however still preserves some slight vestiges of its former splendor.

Whilst they were employed in the taking and destruction of that magnificent city, Moavias, the governor of Syria, had been preparing a fleet which might enable the Saracens to make conquests of greater importance

Hegyra 27.

Ch. ær. 647.

The Saracens

take the island

of Cyprus,

and are after-

wards expelled.

led.

OTHMAN.
Hegyra 27.
Ch. ær. 647

portance than any they had already gained. His first attempt was on the island of Cyprus, of which he got possession, though he could not maintain it for more than two years: during which the Christians made many fruitless attempts to retake it; but at last, by dint of repeated attacks, they entered the isle, and drove out the Mussulmen.

They seize the
isle of Rhodes.

The following year Moavias was more successful. Having met the grecian emperor, who was cruising in the phœnician sea with a large fleet, he attacked him, dispersed his ships, and obliged him to fly. That action happened about the 34th year of the Hegyra, and the 654th of the christian æra. The next year Moavias won the island of Rhodes, and threw down the famous Colossus of the sun, which was said to be one of the wonders of the world. He caused it to be broken in pieces, and sent it to Alexandria.

Hegyra 34.
Ch. ar. 654.

A general
complaint
against Oth-
man.

The year that conquest was made, was the epocha of those intestine commotions which put an end to Othman's reign. That Caliph had many good qualities, and would have been worthy of praise, had it been his lot only to have filled a private station; but he was unfit for government: whether it was through want of judgment or from caprice, it is certain he was guilty of many imprudent actions, which caused him to be despised by the people, and furnished his enemies with an opportunity of decrying him,

him, and even of openly conspiring against him. OTHMAN.
Hegyra 34.
Ch. ær. 654.

It was not at Medina alone that murmurs were heard; each province in particular had different causes of complaint against the Caliph. The flame insensibly spread; their minds were embittered, and at last the whole Mussulman empire rung with complaints against Othman's administration.

Among other grievances, they accused him of not consulting the elders, according to the engagement he entered into, previous to his election to the sovereignty; that he had suffered Hakam-ebn-Al-As (whom the prophet had banished, and the Caliphs had not presumed to recal) to re-appear at Medina; that he had deprived Saïd-ebn-Abi-vakkas, one of the six electors of the government which he possessed, and had placed in his room a man of an infamous character; that he had risked the loss of Egypt, by recalling Amru, in order to bestow that government on his foster brother: a charge which occasioned the loss of a great number of Mussulmen, who were slain at the second siege of Alexandria; that he had, in a lavish manner, bestowed the public money on his friends and relations: and they added, as their last grievance, that he had presumed to sit in the pulpit used by Mahomet, in the mosque, whereas his predecessors had not dared, out of respect to the prophet, to

Y 2

place.

OTHMAN.
Hegyra 35.
Ch. ær. 655.

The Caliph
threatens
the malecon-
tents.

place themselves therein. Abubecre had always sat a step lower; and Omar, who was still more modest, two steps below it.

Such were the crimes which were openly alledged against the Caliph. The steps he took to silence their complaints, totally alienated from him the minds of his subjects. He one day explained himself in the open mosque, touching the complaints that were formed against him, and particularly the use he made of the public treasures. He laid it down as a maxim, that the treasure being sacred as belonging to God, he who was Caliph had an absolute power to dispose of it. He vented his curses on all such as should dare to arraign his conduct by groundless murmurings, or virulent libels; and he threatened severely to punish all such as should attempt to form the least cabal against him.

A Mussulman of spirit * who was present, having stood up and protested against the absolute power which Othman arrogated to himself, the Caliph commanded he should be punished, which was done on the spot, and in so inhuman a manner, that he was left for dead.

This new event was as it were a signal for a revolt. The malecontents formed a confederacy, and having taken up arms, they assembled together, and went and encamped at a small distance from Medina, whence

* Ammar-ebn-Yafer.

they sent deputies to the Caliph, with orders to insist that he should either quit his dignity, or conform to the conduct of his predecessors.

OTHMAN.

Hegyra 35.
Ch. ær. 655.

The Caliph was quite disconcerted by this alternative : he at once lost all the firmness he shewed at the time the first complaints broke out against him, and resolved he would condescend to make excuses, which rendered him contemptible in the eyes of the greatest part of his subjects.

Method used
by the Caliph
to maintain
himself in his
dignity.

He therefore solemnly declared in full mosque, that he was sorry for the faults he had committed, in his management of the state, and called God to witness, that he was resolved to make ample amends for the future.

This mortifying step was so far from reconciling his subjects to him, that, on the contrary, it increased their resentment ; for as they looked on his condescension to be no more than a base and artful attempt to maintain himself in possession of the throne, they therefore judged he was unworthy of it.

The Caliph's secret enemies exasperated the minds of the people against him more and more ; and their design was greatly forwarded by the emissaries they sent into the provinces, so that the whole empire was soon in a blaze. The malecontent troops, who were encamped near Medina, then received considerable reinforcements, and those

The sedition
increases.

OTHMAN.
Hegyra 35.
Ch. ær. 655.

forces being joined, intended to enter the city, and openly attack the Caliph.

Othman, who knew not what to do in so desperate a situation, at last had recourse to Mogairah-ebn-Schabah, and Amru-ebn-Al-As, (who was lately returned to Medina.) He intreated them to intercede for him with the rebels; and if he must be prosecuted, that they would at least prevail on his enemies to afford him a fair trial, and judge him according to the rules and maxims of the Alcoran.

The deputies returned without success. The animosity of the people was raised to so high a pitch, that nothing favourable was to be expected from them; and indeed Othman's advocates were forced to leave them without having been so much as heard.

Ali suppresses
the sedition.

The Caliph, whose fears continually grew stronger, applied to Ali, and begged he would not abandon him in so critical a juncture. Ali's mediation was more effectual than the former. The personal regard they had for him, but more their respect for him as Mahomet's son-in-law, prevailed on them to listen to such terms of accommodation as he came to propose.

Ali had taken the precaution to cause Othman to sign a writing, by which he promised forthwith to remove all such causes of discontent as he had already given. This writing purported no more than the Caliph had declared in the last assembly, but as Ali, had thereto
subscribed

subscribed his name as well as Othman, they OTHMAN.
probably thought themselves bound to pay Hegyra 35.
some deference to so good a security. Ch. æ. 655.

A conference was therefore immediately held, and the sedition was suppressed, by Ali's consenting to the first demand the people made. They required that the government of Egypt should be given to Mahomet, the son of Abubecre, and that Abdallah should be recalled. He was the same that suffered Alexandria to be taken, and who had been sent for home, and replaced by Amru. But so soon as the latter had retaken that city, and restored tranquillity in Egypt, he received orders to return to Medina, and the Caliph again replaced him by Abdallah.

But now he had no hopes of maintaining him in that government. The Caliph even thought himself happy that by sacrificing him he might regain the good-will of his subjects. He therefore recalled Abdallah, and appointed Mahomet in his stead. By that compliance the tumult was appeased, and each man returned to his duty. However, as the Caliph had many private enemies, they secretly conspired his ruin, and the unhappy Othman finally became a prey to their rancorous hatred.

It will doubtless be surprizing to find the famous Aïesha amongst the number of the Caliph's enemies, and still more to hear the plots she laid against him. That woman, who had gained the highest credit amongst the

Aïesha forms a design to dethrone Othman.

Y 4

Mahometans,

OTHMAN. Mahometans, on account of her wisdom and
 Hegyra 35. merit, had an utter aversion to Othman.
 Ch. ær. 635. Historians are silent as to the cause of her ha-
 tred; and have only told us, that Aïesha was
 desirous of placing on the throne Abdallah-
 ebn-Zobeir; and in order to succeed in her
 design, had prevailed on Abdallah to make
 away with the Caliph.

It is a very difficult matter to reconcile the
 thoughts of so infamous a design, with the ex-
 travagant praises which historians have be-
 stowed on the good qualities of that woman;
 but what will seem more amazing is, that,
 having formed a project to dethrone the Ca-
 liph, she did not chuse Mahomet the son of
 Abubecre, who was her own brother, to be his
 successor, rather than pitch on Abdallah, who
 was no relation to her.

Othman is be-
 trayed by his
 secretary.

Aïesha, by her intrigues, gained a numerous
 party; however the Caliph's ruin did not flow
 from that quarter. He nurtured in his own
 house a bitter enemy, who was the more dan-
 gerous, as he was the man he most confided
 in, and whom he employed to transact the
 greatest part of his affairs.

Mervan-ebn-Hakem (for so the traytor was
 called) was Othman's secretary: all dispatches
 went through his hands; he answered them;
 and the Caliph readily approved what he did,
 without harbouring the least suspicion of his
 treachery.

When Mervan joined the cabal, he made
 use of the confidence reposed in him, abso-
 lutely

lutely to undo the Caliph. Amongst all the OTHMAN.
 mines he sprung for the accomplishment of Hegyra 35.
 his purpose, none proved so fatal as a letter Ch. ær. 635.
 he forged at the very time Ali's mediation
 seemed to have restored Othman to the fa-
 vour of the people.

Peace having thereby been a little settled,
 the rebels had lain down their arms, and the
 inhabitants of the provinces who joined them
 had resolved to return home. Mahomet, the
 son of Abubecre, was also departed to take pos-
 session of his government, in order to succeed
 Abdallah-ebn-Saïd, according to the agree-
 ment which served as a basis to the peace.
 Whilst Mahomet was pursuing his journey
 with a numerous train of Egyptians, who were
 in Medina at the time of his departure, he
 saw a courier pass by, who was carrying dis-
 patches from the Caliph. The new governor
 stopped the messenger, and, finding he was
 going to Alexandria, he was seized with a
 curiosity to open the packet, and examine
 the contents of the letters.

No sooner had he unsealed the dispatches,
 than to his great astonishment he found that
 the Caliph had ordered Abdallah to arrest the
 new governor, so soon as he should reach the
 territory of Egypt, and without form of law
 to cut off his hands and feet, as well as those
 of several officers in his train ; after which he
 was commanded to impale them.

Such were the orders contained in the Ca-
 liph's dispatches ; though the ill-fated Oth-
 man

OTHMAN. man was an utter stranger to them. They were
 Hegyra 35. solely contrived by the faithless Mervan; but
 Ch. ær. 655. they did not give themselves time to sift mat-
 ters to the bottom. The letters bore the Ca-
 liph's name, and were sealed with his seal:
 and that was enough to re-kindle the flame of
 sedition, which had not been thoroughly extin-
 guished.

The sedition
 is renewed.

Mahomet in a fury turned back with his
 retinue, and on his arrival at Medina shewed
 the letters to all such as were desirous of perus-
 ing them: he even caused copies of them
 to be dispersed over the adjacent provinces.
 The minds of all men were filled with wrath,
 and their whole discourse turned on the Ca-
 liph's treachery, and how necessary it was to
 rid themselves of him.

Though Othman loudly protested he had no
 hands in the cruel orders issued in his name,
 it was of no avail, he could not obtain credit,
 and his house was soon surrounded by a croud
 of armed men, who threatened to destroy all
 with fire and sword, if he was not delivered
 up into their hands.

In this dismal situation, the Caliph again
 had recourse to Ali, who instantly sent two
 of his sons, Hassan and Hossein, with a guard
 to defend the Caliph's house; but whether
 they were not strong enough to resist the at-
 tacks of the conspirators, or whether they
 were not displeased at the thoughts of a vacancy
 in the throne, on account of the hopes Ali
 might entertain of ascending it, it is said they
 made

made but a slight defence, and the Caliph's OTHMAN.
 enemies met with no great difficulty in forcing Hegyra 35.
 their passage. Ch. ær. 655.

The Caliph, finding he could no longer trust in arms for security from the vengeance of his enemies, was in hopes he might assuage their fury by the help of religious motives. So soon as he was informed the mutineers had entered his house, he grasped the Alcoran, and placing it on his breast, he thus appeared before those who were come to assassinate him. He flattered himself that the famous book, for which the Mussulmen entertained so great a veneration, would have proved an effectual safe-guard, and that he should have obtained time to make proof of the imposture which had caused the disorder; but this precaution he made use of absolutely failed him. As their resentment was levelled at his person alone, so soon as he appeared, they were blind to all other objects; and, without heeding whether he was under protection of the Alcoran or not, they gave him several wounds with swords and spears, of which he died on the spot.

Thus died the unhappy Othman, third Caliph of the Arabians. He was then fourscore years old, and had reigned about twelve years. His enemies had not fully satisfied their revenge by inflicting on him so cruel a death; they refused to bestow on his body an honourable interment. His corpse lay three days above ground, and at last they condescended

OTHMAN. descended to bury it ; but without observing the
 Hegyra 35. least of the ceremonies usually performed for
 Ch. ær. 655. persons of his rank, and at last he was in-
 terred in the very garments he wore when he
 was assassinated.

Othman was tall, and of a very majestic
 air and deportment ; his complexion was in-
 clining to brown, and his beard thick. As
 to his manners they were irreproachable ;
 he had a very great respect and attachment
 to his religion, and was a scrupulous observer
 of all its precepts. He both read and me-
 ditated on the Alcoran with great application,
 and was very liberal to the poor.

He was condemned for shewing a partial
 regard for his own family ; which often in-
 duced him to displace persons of the most
 distinguished merit, to substitute to them men
 of little knowledge and mean capacity.

It also appears that he did not make due
 enquiries into the dispositions and charac-
 ters of those in whom he placed a confidence,
 and that he relied too much on their inte-
 grity : from whence arose all the fatal events
 which alienated the affections of his sub-
 jects, and finally caused his destruction.

I N D E X

T O T H E

F I R S T V O L U M E.

A.

A BADAH is sent by Amru to treat with Makaukas, page 292.

ABDALLAH-EBN-GIAFFAR is appointed to attack a monastery, at which a great fair was held, 165. He refuseth to retire, tho' there were more troops at the monastery than he expected to find, 166. He attacks the monastery, *ibid.* Danger he is in, 167. Khaled goes to his assistance, *ibid.* He requires to have the daughter of the governor of Tripoli, who had been taken prisoner, and obtains her, 168.

ABDALLAH-EBN-HODAFAR is taken prisoner by the Greeks, 271. Omar procures his liberty, 274. Conference between them, *ibid.*

ABDALLAH-EBN-SAID is appointed governor of Egypt, 319. His incapacity and the revolution it causeth, 320. He is recalled from Egypt, 329.

ABDARRAHMAN, the Caliph's son, fights to advantage with the new governor of Bosra, 74. His rashness brings on a general action, in which the Arabians get the better, 75. He is admitted into Bosra, and opens the gates to the Arabians, 78. Braves the grecian army, 82. He is appointed to carry news of the Grecians defeat to the Caliph, 125. He brings back his answer to Khaled, 127. He is concerned in pursuing the forces of Damascus, where he cuts off the head of Thomas their commander, 150. Omar appoints him one of the electors, 308. Proposal he made in the assembly for the election, 312.

ABRAHAM considered by the Mussulmen to be the founder of their religion, 225.

ABUBECRE appeases the dispute that arose on the question touching Mahomet's death, 36. And the like relating to the place of burying him, 37. Why he was called Abubecre, 46. He is chosen successor to Mahomet, 48. Steps he took with Ali to prevail on him to acknowledge his authority,

authority, 51. Indifference he shewed for sovereignty, 52. Measures he took to restrain a revolt arisen in several provinces, 54. He resolves to make war on the Christians, to compel them to become Mahometans or pay tribute, 59. Letter he sent to the governors of provinces to assemble troops, 61. He reviews his army, and prays for the prosperity of his arms, *ibid.* Orders he gives the general, 62. Sends fresh troops into Syria under command of Saïd, 65. Method he used to deprive Saïd of the command, 66. His orders to Amru on appointing him general, 67. He raises Abu-obeidah to be generalissimo of the army in Syria, 68. He takes from him the command and gives it to Khaled, *ibid.* His sentiments on receiving news of the success of his forces, 125. The Arabians asking leave to serve in Syria, he denies them, *ibid.* Remonstrances made by them on that account, 126. He grants their request, 127. Death of that Caliph, 154. He names Omar for his successor, and prevails on him to accept the Caliphship, *ibid.* Prayer he utters on that occasion, *ibid.* His character, 156. Description of his person, 157. Omar's praises of his disinterestedness, *ibid.* He is greatly regretted, 162.

ABU-OBEIDAH. Vide OBEIDAH.

ABU-SOFIAN. Vide SOFIAN.

ÆLIA, a name given to a city of Jerusalem, 212.

AIESHA, Mahomet's favourite wife, 36. At what age she was married, and when she died, 46. She is consulted as being filled with the spirit of Mahomet, 66. She forms a conspiracy to dethrone Othman, 327.

ALCORAN, what it is, and what it contains, 39. 42. On what occasion many chapters of that book were framed, 40. Who assisted Mahomet in composing his Alcoran, 43. By whom the several chapters of it were collected, 157.

ALEXANDRIA, how conquered by the Arabians, 298. Retaken by the Grecians, 299. The Arabians master it a second time, *ibid.* By whom the library of that city was founded and augmented, 301. It is burned by the Arabians, 304. The city is dismantled, 321. Its state since that time, *ibid.*

ALI appointed regent in the absence of Mahomet his cousin, 33. His claim to the Caliphship, 50. He is forced to do homage to Abubecre, 51. Advice he gives the Caliph, 127. He does not oppose Omar's election, 158. Prevails on him to visit Jerusalem, 217. Is appointed to govern the state during his Absence, *ibid.* Reason why Omar did not appoint him his successor, 307. He is one of

- of the six electors, 308. He refuses the Caliphship, 313. He quells an insurrection against Othman, 326. Is accused of not assisting him as he ought, 330.
- ALLAH ACBAR**, war cry of the Mahometans, 78.
- ALMOTHANA** gathers the remains of the arabian army and secures them, 314.
- ALVAKEDI**, an arabian historian. Reflections on that author, and other writers of the same country, 87.
- AMRU-EBN-AL-AS** appointed general of the reinforcements sent into Syria, 67. Is recalled from Irak, 100. His success in Palestine, 276. Account of the conference between him and Constantine, 277. He takes possession of Cesarea, 286. Is appointed generalissimo after Obeidah's death, 287. Goes into Egypt to subdue it, 289. Takes Pharmah, and besieges Mesrah, *ibid.* Conditions he grants the governor on his yielding, 293. Besieges Alexandria, 295. Is taken prisoner, *ibid.* How he recovers his liberty, 295. Takes Alexandria, 298. Prevents its being plundered, 300. Conquers all Egypt, *ibid.* His taste for learning and learned men, 302. Consults Omar what he should do with the Alexandrian library, 303. Methods he used to supply Arabia, visited with a famine, 305. He makes war in Africa, *ibid.* Is recalled from Egypt, 318. Is sent back again and retakes Alexandria, 320. The Caliph employs him to appease the conspirators, 426.
- ANGELS**. The Arabians believe that angels fight on their side amongst their troops, 187. How they describe them, 188, note.
- ANSARIANS**, why so called, 37, note. They require that Mahomet should be buried at Medina, 37. They set up a right of appointing a sovereign over the Mussulmen, 47.
- ARABIA**, geographical description of that province, 3. Religions that prevailed there in Mahomet's days, 9.
- ARABIANS**, their different settlements, 4. Their antiquity, *ibid.* Conquered by the Romans, 5. Submit to Mahomet, 32.
- ARETAS**, name given to the kings of Gassan, 4.
- ARZEMIDOKHT**, queen of Persia, is dethroned, 315.
- ASTACKHAR**, a grecian priest, negotiates a truce between the Arabians and the city of Kenesrin, 175.

B.

- BAHIRA. Vide SERGIUS.
 BASIL, his treachery, 284.
 BLACK-STONE, what it is, 26, note.
 BOOTY, how divided, 153, 168.

C.

- CAAB, an arabian poet recovers Mahomet's favour after having wrote a satire against him, 30. Mahomet invests him with his robe, *ibid.* What became of it, *ibid.*, note.
 CAAB, account of that Jew's conversion to Mahometism, 225.
 CAABAH, what it is, 6. The superintendence of that temple goes from the title of the Khofaites to the Coraischites, 7.
 CADHIGA espouses Mahomet, 8. She propagates her husband's doctrine, 11. Her death, 46.
 CALIPH, title given to Mahomet's successors, 50.
 CALOUS brings succours to Damascus, 80. His quarrel with the governor of that city about the command, 81. Is obliged to accept of the challenge given by Khaled, 83. Is vanquished and made prisoner, 85. He advises Khaled to challenge the governor to a single combat, *ibid.* Is beheaded by Khaled's order, 87.
 CAMELS, sacrifices of, instituted by Mahomet; neglected by his followers, 34.
 CAULAH, Derar's sister, flirts up the arabian women, her fellow prisoners, not to submit to the treatment the Greeks were preparing for them, 105. She kills a grecian soldier, 106. Despises the caresses and threats of Peter the general, 107. She breaks his horses legs, *ibid.* She is placed at the head of the battalions composed of arabian women at the battle of Ainadin, 115.
 CONSTANTINE, son of the emperor Heraclius, complains that Mahan had suffered the Arabians to decamp without falling on them, 120. He intrenches himself in sight of the arabian army, 276. Demands a conference, 277. Account of that conference, *ibid.* He is deserted by his troops, 282. Retires to Cefarea, *ibid.* Flies to Constantinople, 285.
 COPTICS, what they are, 291, note.
 CORAISCHITES, the most famous tribe of the Arabians, 6. They seize the superintendence of the Caabah, 7. Oppose

pose Mahomet's doctrine, 11. They worst his troops, 15. Gain a victory over them, 18. Make a truce with Mahomet, 21. Great part of that tribe embrace his doctrine, 27.

D.

DAMASCUS, a city of Syria, account of the siege thereof, 79.

DAMES undertakes to surprize the castle of Aleppo, and succeeds, 238. He engages in a single combat with Nestorius, who takes him prisoner, 261. He regains his liberty, 262. Offers to march and subdue the Hill Country, 269.

DAVID goes to Khaled from the grecian general to propose an interview, 118. He informs Khaled of Verdanus's design to get him assassinated during the conference, 119.

DERAR braves the grecian army, 82. Skirmishes with them, 94. Kills their standard-bearer, and alone drives away the Christians that attempted to retake it, 94. He is wounded by the governor of Emessia, whom he afterwards kills, 95. He is taken prisoner, *ibid.* Is set at liberty, 97. attacks the troops of Damascus, defeats them, and takes Paul their commander, 103. Kills their general Peter, and sets Caulah at liberty, 109. Alone defends himself against 30 horsemen, and kills several of them, 113. Engages with the Greeks near Ainadin, 117. Slays the soldiers Verdanus had placed in ambush to surprize Khaled, 120. He kills Verdanus, 123. Goes with Khaled to assist the Arabians, who were attacking a monastery, 167. Marches with a reinforcement to Obeidah, 184. Is taken prisoner, 202. Is set at liberty, 207. Being taken by Haïm, he is presented to the emperor, 256. Conversation between him and that prince, 257. He sallies out on the grecian army, 265.

E.

EBN, an arabian word, which signifies son, 24, note.

EMIR-AL-MOUMENIN, title given to Omar, and used by his successors, 159.

F.

FAMINE in Arabia, 304. How remedied, 305.

FATIMA, daughter of Mahomet, Ali's wife, 47.

FIROUZ, cause of his displeasure against the Caliph, 306. He assassinated him, *ibid.* Kills himself after an obstinate defence, 307.

G.

GABRIEL (the angel) how described in the Alcoran, 214, note. Account of the horse which he provided to carry Mahomet to heaven, 215, note.

GAMES of chance, prohibited by the Alcoran, and why, 169, note.

GASSAN, kings of, why so called, 4.

GIABALAH, on what occasion he renounces Mahometism, 171. He enters the emperor's service, 172. He brings a reinforcement of troops to the grecian army, commanded by Mahan, 200. He rejects Khaled's proposal of remaining neuter, 202. Is defeated, *ibid.* Proposes to the emperor the assassination of the Caliph, 258.

H.

HAFSA, daughter of Omar, Mahomet's wife, the time of her marriage and death, 46, 47. To her custody they commit the Alcoran contained in one volume, 157.

HAGI, or **HAGIAR**, surname given to Arabia Petrea, 3.

HAIM, the son of Giabalah, advantage he gains over the Mussulmen, 256.

HAMZA receives from Mahomet, his nephew, the command of the mussulman army, 15. He looses a battle against the inhabitants of Mecca, *ibid.*

HARETH, name of the Gassanides, whence the word Areta is derived, 4.

HEGIAZ, province of Arabia Deserta, 3.

HEGYRA, the common era of the Mahometans, when it commenced, 13.

HERACLIUS, emperor of the Greeks, loses a battle against the Mussulmen, 26. The troops he sends into Syria against the Mussulmen are beaten, 64. He sends relief to Damascus, 80. Raises a considerable army against the Mahometans, 89. Which having been defeated, he sends another, 99. He procures the liberty of his daughter, widow of Thomas, 153. He sends a fresh army against the Arabians, 199. His conversation with the arabian prisoners, 256. He consents to the Caliph's being assassinated, 259. Terrified by a dream, he flies to Constantinople, 264. He sets Abdallah at liberty, 274.

HERBIS marches out of Damascus with Thomas, at the head of the Christians, 142. He is killed, 150.

HERBIS, governor of Baalbec, attacks the Mahometans and is defeated, 181. He sallies out with success, 182. Makes a second

a second fally, 183. Is attacked in the rear, and obliged to retire to a ruinous monastery, 184. He vainly attempts to force his way out, 186. Terms agreed on between him and Obeidah, 188. He persuades the inhabitants of Baalbec to accept them, 189. Obtains a tenth of the profits which the citizens gained from the Arabians, 191. And requiring more is slain in a commotion, *ib.*
 HIEMARITE kings, how long their empire subsisted, 4.
 HIEMEN, name given by the Arabians to Arabia Felix, 3.
 HOMERITES, tribe of the Arabians, whose women were taught to handle arms, 106.

I.

JACOBITES, who they are, 290, note.
 JOHN, brother to Youkinna, governor of Aleppo, persuades the inhabitants to yield to the Mussulmen, 228.
 JOHN, surnamed the Grammarian, gains Amru's friendship, 302. He asks of him the alexandrian library, 303.
 JEMAMATH, a province of Arabia Deserta, 3. The princes of that country submit to Mahomet, 32.
 JERUSALEM, account of the siege and surrender of that city, 211.
 IMAN, creation of an Iman at Mecca, 31.
 JEWS of Arabia subdued by Mahomet, 22.
 JONAS, adventure which caused him to change his religion, 145. He prevails on Khaled to pursue the Christians, whom he had permitted to quit Damascus, 147. He takes his wife prisoner, who kills herself, 151. Means used to comfort him for that misfortune, *ibid.*
 JOSIAS delivers up the city of Damascus to the Arabians, 137.
 IRACK, a province of Asia; which made a part of what was formerly called Chaldea, afterwards divided into arabian Irak, and persian Irak, 4.
 ISRAIL, governor of Damascus; his dispute with Calois for the chief command, 81. He accepts Khaled's challenge, 86. Is taken prisoner, 87. He is beheaded, *ibid.*
 ISRAIL, name of an angel, as the Mahometans believe, 86.
 IZDEGERD is made king of Persia, 315. Is beat by the Arabians, *ibid.* Quarrels with Tarkan, 316. Is defeated by him and killed, 317.

K.

KHALED-EBN-WALID, surnamed, Sword of God, is appointed generalissimo of the army sent out by Mahomet
 Z 2 against

against the Greeks, 24. He defeats them 25. He obtains
 a victory over such as had revolted after Mahomet's death,
 54. He causes Malek to be beheaded, without orders,
 56. Omar obtains his pardon for that fault, 57. He com-
 mands a large body of troops at the battle of Akrebah,
 58. He is made commander in chief of the army in Sy-
 ria, 68. He carries on the siege of Bosra which Sergiabil
 had opened, 69. His opinion of Obeidah, 70. He obliges
 the governor of Bosra to accept his challenge for a single
 combat, 72. Reception he gave Romanus, the deposed
 governor, who pointed out to him a way to take the city,
 77. He lays siege to Damascus, 81. Fights with Calois,
 and takes him prisoner, 85. He challenges the governor
 of Damascus, whom he also makes prisoner, 86. Upon
 intelligence of the arrival of the grecian army, he is of opi-
 nion to march out and fight them, 90, 93. He rejects the
 terms proposed by the inhabitants of Damascus, 92. He
 defeats the grecian army commanded by Verdanus, 97.
 He writes a circular letter to the generals to join him at
 Ainaidin, 100. He raises the siege of Damascus, and goes
 to meet the Greeks, *ibid.* He gives up to Obeidah the
 command of the rear guard, 101. He marches after the
 troops of Damascus, who had defeated his rear guard,
 and cuts them in pieces, 102. He put his army in array
 to engage the Christians, 115. He rejects the proposals
 made him by Verdanus, 117. He agrees to a conference
 which was desired by that general, 118. He receives in-
 telligence that an ambush is laid for him, and would have
 gone unattended, 119. He yields to the advice of his of-
 ficers, who counselled him not to expose himself, 120.
 He goes to the place of rendezvous, where he surprizes
 Verdanus, 122. Letter by which he informs the Caliph
 of the victory at Ainadin, 124. He resumes the siege of
 Damascus, 128. Refuses a truce to the inhabitants, 135.
 Contrast between his character and that of Obeidah, *ibid.*
 He is let into the city by the treachery of a priest, 137.
 He disapproves the treaty Obeidah had entered into with
 the inhabitants, 138. At last he ratifies it, on the repre-
 sentation of his officers, 140. Difficulties he made to
 grant the inhabitants of that city the security they required
 during their retreat, 141. He resolves to pursue them,
 tho' he had promised they should not be disturbed during
 their journey, 143. A dispute between him and Obeidah,
 touching the corn in Damascus, suspends the execution of
 his project, 144. He resumes it at the instigation of a man
 called Jonas, 147. He sets the emperor's daughter at li-
 berty,

berty, 153. He returns to Damascus, where he divides his booty, *ibid.* Omar deprives him of the command in chief, 159. Reasons which induced the Caliph so to do, 160. He is informed of his dismissal, 162. Greatness of soul he shewed upon that occasion, 163. His conduct at a juncture when they wanted his assistance, *ibid.* He marches to assist the troops who were attacking a monastery, and defeats the Grecians who had surrounded them, 167. His conversation with a famous monk of that monastery, 168. The Caliph denies him the praises due to his bravery, 170. He besieges Emessa, 172. Tries to dissuade Obeidah from granting a truce to the inhabitants of Kennefrin, 176. He defeats the forces of the governor of Kennefrin, and kills him, 180. Danger he is in at the siege of Emessa, 196. Advice he gives to facilitate the taking the city, 197. He puts it in execution with success, 198. Upon intelligence of the arrival of the grecian army, he is for retiring to Yermouk, which is done, 201. He persuades Giabalah to stand neuter, and upon his refusal gives him battle, and defeats him, 202. Account of his conference with Mahan, 204. He commands in chief at the battle of Yermouk, which is won by the Arabians, 207. He besieges Youkinna in the castle of Aleppo, 233. He, by means of Dames's stratagem, takes it by surprize, 241. His victories beyond the Euphrates, 271. He relieves the Arabians surrounded by the Greeks, 272. He is dissuaded from pursuing the Greeks who had retired, 273. He assists Youkinna in seizing Tripoli, 282. His death, 287.

KHOSAITES, a tribe of the Arabians, lose the superintendence of the Caabah, 7.

KOSSA, chief of the Coraischites gets into his hands the superintendence of the Caabah, 7.

L.

LAODICEA taken by the Arabians, 286.

M.

MAHAN (supposed to be the same with Manuel) is sent out by the grecian emperor at the head of an army against the Arabians, 199. He makes proposals which are rejected, 202. He demands a conference, 204. Account of what passed at the conference, *ibid.* He gives up to Khaled the prisoners he had taken, 207. Loses the bat-

tle of Yermouk, 208. Is made prisoner, and killed at Damascus, 210.

MAHOMET, or MOHAMED, his origin and birth, 6. Becomes servant to Cadhiga, who trusts him with the management of her trade, and afterwards marries him, 8. He forms a design of establishing a new religion, *ibid.* What gave rise to the design, *ibid.* He pretends to be inspired, and begins to propagate his doctrine, 10. He escapes from Mecca, and confirms his disciples in his doctrine, 12. He arrives at Medina, 13. Where he preaches his new tenets, 14. He attacks the inhabitants of Mecca, and is repulsed, 15. He makes himself master of a rich caravan, 16. He seizes Mecca, and fixes his religion there, 17. He defeats the Arabians near Bedra, 18. He loses the battle of Ohod, *ibid.* He destroys several tribes who had joined in a league against him, 20. He makes a truce with the Coraischites, 21. He appoints pilgrimages to Mecca, *ibid.* He is poisoned, 23. He commences a war against the Greeks, *ibid.* Gains a victory over them, 25. Performs his first pilgrimage, 26. Defeats several tribes who had revolted, 27. He causes himself to be acknowledged supreme head in spirituals and temporals, 28. He totally subdues all that opposed him, 29. He performs a second pilgrimage to Mecca, *ibid.* He erecteth there tribunals to distribute justice, and appoints an Iman, or pontiff, of his religion, 31. Several arabian princes do homage to him, 32, 33. He marches to Tabouc, where he waits for the Greeks, who retire without attacking him, 33. Mahomet's last pilgrimage to Mecca, called the farewell pilgrimage, 34. He disperses the factions of two princes who set up for prophets, 35. Mahomet's death, 36. His death is called in question, *ibid.* Divisions touching the place for his burial, 37. Description of his person, 38. His great inclination for women, and how he justified it, 40. How many children he had, 47. The Mahometans do not address their prayers to Mahomet, 61, note.

MAHOMET, son of Abubecre, made governor of Egypt, 327. He discovers the orders given to arrest him, 329. Disperses copies of them over Arabia, and occasions an insurrection against Othman, *ibid.*

MAHOMETISM, fundamental points of that doctrine, 43. Different sects which arose in that religion, 53 and note.

MAHWA, a persian prince, stirs up Tarkan to revenge himself on Izdegerd, 316.

- MAKAUKAS**, governor of Mefrah, abandons the Greeks that were in the place, and makes a separate treaty with Amru, 292.
- MAKAWKAS**, prince of Alexandria and Egypt, sends presents to Mahomet, 41.
- MALEK**, a prince of note amongst the Arabians, revolts after Mahomet's death, 53. He loses a battle against the Mussulmen, 54. Conference between him and Khaled, 55. He is killed, 56.
- MALEK-ALASCHTARI** commands 1000 horsemen at the taking of Aazaz, 245. He takes prisoner an arabian Christian, who informs him that the design of the Mussulmen upon Aazaz was discovered, *ibid.* He defeats the governor of Arravendan, who was marching to relieve the place, 246. He enters and assists Youkinna to make himself master of it, 249. Expressions he used on hearing of the governor's fate, 250.
- MARTYRS** amongst the Mahometans, 16.
- MEAD** is recalled from the country of Haram, where he commanded, 100. Khaled puts him at the head of part of the right wing of the army at the battle of Ainadin, 115.
- MECCA**, a city of Arabia Deserta, in the province of Hegiaz, 3. Mahomet appoints a pilgrimage thither, 21. Ceremonies to be performed there, 22.
- MEDINA**, a city of Arabia Deserta, in the same province, 3. When and why it was called so, 13. Mahomet's tomb is in that city, 37.
- MEISSARAH-EBN-MESRUH**, undertakes, together with Dames, the expedition to conquer the hill country, 269. Is surrounded there, 271. How he is relieved, 272. Dissuades Khaled from pursuing the Greeks, 273.
- MERVAN-EBN-HAKEM**, Othman's secretary, betrays his master, and causes a new insurrection against him, 328.
- MESRAH**, account of the siege thereof, 289.
- MIRACLES** of Mahomet; several arabian authors affirm that he disowned them, 12, note. Mahometism was to be established without miracles, 44.
- MOAVIAS**, governor of Syria, his exploits by sea, 322.
- MOGAIRAH-EBN-SCHAAD** proposes to give the Caliph the title of Emir-al-Moumenin, which is approved of, 158.
- MOGAIRAH-EBN-SCHABAH**, is employed by Othman to appease the conspirators, 326.
- MOHAGERIANS**, why so called, 37, note. Their dispute with the Ansarians, touching the place of Mahomet's sepulchre, *ibid.* They claim a right of appointing a successor to Mahomet, 47.

- MONKS, regard paid to them by the Mahometans, 63, 168.
 MOSLEMAH-EBN-MAKHALED is taken prisoner with Amru, 295. How he regains his liberty, 296.
 MOSSELLAMAH, or MOSEILAMA, prince of Hagera, pays homage to Mahomet, 32. He sets up for a prophet and revolts, 57. Loses a battle, in which he is killed, 58.
 MUEZINS, a name given to those who call the Mussulmen to prayers, 223.
 MOUMENIN, an arabian word, which signifies the faithful, 158.

N.

- NESTORIUS, general of the christian army, fights hand to hand with Dames, and takes him prisoner, 260. He fights with Dehac, and comes off honourably, 261.
 NOMAN receives orders to quit Palmyra which he had taken, and with his forces to join the army in Syria, 100. Khaled puts him at the head of part of the right wing at the battle of Ainadin, 115.

O.

- OBEID, unhappy event of his expedition against the Persians, in which he is killed, 314.
 OBEIDAH (Abu) is appointed generalissimo of the mussulman army in Syria, 68. His conduct doth not answer the Caliph's expectations, *ibid.* He is put out, and Khaled appointed in his stead, *ibid.* He joins his troops to Khaled's to besiege Damascus, 80. His opinion on the debate, whether they should raise the siege to march and fight the grecian army, 90. By his advice the generals who commanded several bodies of troops are ordered to march to Ainadin, 93. He takes the command of the rear guard of the army 101. Is attacked and defeated, 102. Difference between his character and that of Khaled's, 135. He grants terms to the inhabitants of Damascus on their surrender, 136. His dispute with Khaled on that account, 138. He prevails on Khaled to comply with the request of the inhabitants, who were going to Antioch, 141. A contest between him and Khaled touching the corn, the property of which he had left to the citizens, 144. He is named commander in chief of the army in Syria, 159. Is embarrassed on receiving news of his promotion, 161. Sends a body of troops to take a monastery, at which a remarkable fair was held, 164. Method he takes for engaging Khaled to assist those who attacked the monastery, 167. He sends

sends an account to Omar of the taking the monastery, and asks his directions on several matters, 169. He besieges Emessa, 172. Grants a truce for a year to the city, 173. His humanity induces several cities to submit, 174. He grants a truce to the inhabitants of Kennefrin, 177. How he behaves on a demand made by some of those inhabitants, of satisfaction for an insult against the emperor, 178. He takes a caravan, 180. Lays siege to Baalbec, 181. Conditions he grants to the inhabitants, 188. Appoints Rafi governor of the place, 190. Stratagem he used to facilitate the taking of Emessa, 193. He takes Arestan by stratagem, *ibid.* He favourably treats the inhabitants of Schaïzar, who submitted voluntarily, 195. He resumes the siege of Emessa, *ibid.* The city surrenders on terms, 199. On intelligence that the Greek army was advancing, he holds a council, 200. Informs the Caliph of Giabalah's defeat, and demands supplies, 203. Yields the command of the army to Khaled, and takes charge of the rear guard at the time of the battle of Yermouk, 207. Duties he performed during the battle, 209. He writes to the Caliph a particular account of the action, 210. He divides the booty, 211. He sends troops to besiege Jerusalem, *ibid.* Letter by which he summons the inhabitants to yield, 212. His answer to Sophronius in the conference he had with him, 214. He invites Omar to come to Jerusalem, 216. Is made governor of northern Syria, 224. Makes himself master of several places, and lays siege to Aleppo, 227. Grants terms to the inhabitants who surrender, 232. He ravages the neighbourhood of Antioch, 263. Which yielding, he takes possession of it, 265. Why he would not suffer the troops to tarry in that city, 266. Several matters on which he consults Omar, 267. He sends out troops to conquer the hill country, 269. His death, 287.

OFFEIRAH, an arabian woman; her reply to Caulah's invitation, 105. Khaled gives her (together with Caulah) the command of the battalions composed of arabian women, 115.

OMAR, his zeal in asserting that Mahomet was not dead, 36. He induces the assembly of Mussulmen to chuse Abubecre for Mahomet's successor, 48. Motives to his conduct on that occasion, 49. He forces Ali to acknowledge Abubecre as Caliph, 51. Intercedes with the Caliph for Khaled, who had exceeded his orders, 57. He disapproves of the choice of Saëd whom Abubecre had appointed commander of the forces he sent into Syria,

ria, 66. He refuses to apply for the command in behalf of Amru, 67. He dissuades the Caliph from permitting the Arabians to serve in Syria, 126. On their remonstrances he consents that their requests should be granted, 127. Abubecre designs him for his successor, 154. He refuses that dignity, and afterwards accepts of it on the representations of Abubecre, 155. What he said touching Abubecre's disinterestedness, 157. He is elected Caliph without opposition, 158. Receives the title of Emir-al-Moumenin, 159. Harangues the people in the mosque, *ibid.* Deprives Khaled of the command, and gives it to Obeidah, *ibid.* Opposition he meets with on that account, *ibid.* Reasons for his choice, 160. He is proclaimed Caliph at Damascus, 163. Orders Obeidah to besiege Emessa, 171. Receiving no news from him, he complains of Obeidah's inactivity, 179. He sends supplies to Obeidah, 203. Congratulates him on his victory at Yermouk, 210. Commands him to besiege Jerusalem, 211. Deliberates whether he should go to Jerusalem, as Obeidah requested him to do, and following Ali's advice departs from Medina, 216. Description of his train, 217. Passes many equitable sentences during his journey, 218. Arrives at the arabian camp, and rectifies many errors which had crept in amongst them, 220. Capitulation granted to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, 221. Makes his entry into that city, and visits several of the churches without praying therein, 222. Gives reasons for such a conduct, 223. Adds a new article to the capitulation, which prohibited the Mussulmen from praying on the steps, &c. of the christian churches, *ibid.* His veneration for the places which had been honoured with the presence of the patriarchs, 224. He shares amongst his generals the government of the conquered provinces, *ibid.* He converts a Jew to Mahometism, 225. He returns to Medina, 226. Sends reinforcements to Obeidah, 237. Had like to have been assassinated, 259. His answer to a letter sent by Obeidah for his directions in several matters, 267. Letter he wrote to the emperor to procure Abdallah's liberty, 274. In what manner he received the emperor's present, *ibid.* Steps he took to continue Amru in the command of the army sent out to conquer Egypt, 288. He charges Amru to prevent his troops from plundering, 300. His decision on what was to be done with the alexandrian library, 304. He is assassinated by a disgusted slave, 306. He refuses to nominate a successor, 307. Name electors to chuse a Caliph after him, 308. His eulogium, *ibid.*

OTHMAN dissuades Omar from visiting Jerusalem, 216. would have him deprive Amru of the command in Egypt, 288. Why the Caliph does not name him for his successor, 308. He is appointed one of the electors, *ibid.* Is chosen Caliph in Omar's stead, 313. He sends troops to finish the conquest of Persia, 316. Recals Amru from Egypt, and sends Abdallah-ebn-Saïd in his room, 318. Which causes the loss of Alexandria, 320. He sends Amru again to Egypt, *ibid.* General insurrection against Othman, 322. Motives alledged by the conspirators, 323. Means he took to quiet them, and which occasioned the sedition to increase, 325. He sends deputies, whom the conspirators refuse to hear, 326. By the interposition of Ali the sedition is appeased, *ibid.* Conditions he submits to, *ibid.* A conspiracy formed to dethrone him, 327. He is betrayed by the secretary, 328. Is killed, 331. Description of his person, 332.

P.

PAUL, of Damascus, puts himself at the head of 6000 horse, and defeats the Mussulman rear-guard commanded by Obeidah, 101. He is attacked in his retreat, his troops are cut in pieces, and he is made prisoner, 103. His head is cut off, 109.

PERSIA conquered by the Arabians, 313.

PETER sallies out at the head of 10,000 men of the troops of Damascus against the Arabians, who were marching in quest of the grecian army, 101. He takes their baggage, women, &c. and retires, 102. Halts imprudently, instead of returning to Damascus with all speed, 103. Endeavours without effect to pacify Caulah, who had caused the women prisoners to take up arms, 107. He causes troops to attack them, *ibid.* He is killed, 109.

PIDGEONS, use made of those birds to carry letters, 245.

PLAGUE in Syria, 286.

PREDESTINATION, absolute fundamental tenet of Mahomet's doctrine, 20.

Q.

QUARTER, Mahomet's doctrine forbids such to be slain as call for quarter, 79.

R.

R.

RAFI-EBN-OMEIRAH raises the dejected courage of the Arabians, 93. Defeats the guard which were conducting Derar to prison, and sets him at liberty, 97. Takes prisoner the emperor Heraclius's daughter, 152. Is appointed governor of Baalbec, and on what conditions, 190. He makes inroads upon the adjacent country, *ibid.* The inhabitants of Baalbec put him into possession of the city and government without restrictions, 191. He is taken prisoner in an engagement against Giabalah, 202. He is set at liberty, 207.

ROMANUS, governor of Bosra, vainly attempts to prevail on the inhabitants of that city to surrender to the Mussulmen, 70. Conference between him and Khaled, 71. His cowardice in the mock fight with Khaled, 72. He a second time endeavours to persuade the inhabitants to yield, 73. They deprive him of the command, and confine him to his own house, *ibid.* He delivers up the city to the Mahometans, 76. He turns Mahometan, 79. Serves interpreter to Khaled in his conference with Calous, 85.

S.

SAED is appointed commander of the reinforcements sent to Syria, 65. He is deprived of the command on the solicitation of Omar, and the decision of Aïesha, 66. Disinterested spirit he shewed on that occasion, *ibid.* He commands part of the left wing at the battle of Aina-din, 115. He is one of the electors named to chuse a successor to the Caliph Omar, 308. Advantages he gained in Persia, 315.

SAID goes to Obeidah's relief, 184. He cuts off the troops of Baalbec from the city, and obliges them to retire to a monastery, where he shuts them up, *ibid.* He obliges them to enter into a treaty, and to surrender, 187.

SAID-EBN-AMER is made governor of Aazaz, 250.

SAID-EBN-AMIR is made general of the reinforcements sent to Obeidah, 203. On his march he defeats two Grecian parties, *ibid.*

SARACEN, rise of that name, 310.

SCHADDAD-EBN-AUS is appointed to carry a letter to Damascus, by which Omar acquaints the army of his elevation to the sovereignty, 162.

SERGIABIL commands a body of troops against Mosseilamah, 58. He opens the siege of Bosra, 69. Is repulsed, 70. Khaled goes to his relief, *ibid.* Receives orders to quit Palestine where he commanded, and march to Ainadin, 100. He commands part of the left wing, at the battle of Ainadin, 115. Defends himself courageously against Thomas, 131, 133. Is delivered from imminent danger by Tuleihah, 281. His death, 287.

SERGIUS, a christian monk, assists Mahomet in composing the Alcoran, 43, 63, note.

SIGNAL, fire during the night, and a smoke in the day time, was a signal which the Arabians made use of, 184.

SINAI, a mountain of Arabia Deserta, 3.

SOFIAN (Abu) obliged to give ground before the Grecians, 208. Is roughly handled by an arabian woman, *ibid.* He commands at the siege of Jerusalem before Obeidah's arrival, 211. Omar gives him the government of the southern parts of Syria, 225.

SOHAID-EBN-SABAH, gives the signal to come and relieve Obeidah, who was hard put to it by the troops of Baalbec, 184. Obeidah commends his conduct, but prohibits the doing it fort he future without the general's order, 186.

SOPHRONIUS, patriarch of Jerusalem, confers with Obeidah touching the surrender of the city, 213. He requires it may be made an article, that the Caliph should come and take possession thereof in person, 216. He receives Omar in Jerusalem, and waits on him to the several churches, 222.

SWINES FLESH, the use of it prohibited by the Alcoran, 212, note.

SYRIA, a province of Asia, 3. The Arabians fix themselves there, 4. State of religion in that province at the time of Mahomet, 9.

T.

TALIONIS (Lex) the use of that law prescribed by Mahomet, 172.

TARKAN goes to the relief of Izdegerd, 316. That prince quarrels with him, *ibid.* Is incited by Mahwa, *ibid.* Attacks Izdegerd, and defeats him, 317.

TELLAH is one of the electors named to chuse a Caliph, 308.

THAHAMAH, one of the provinces of Arabia Deserta, 3.

THEODORE, governor of Aazaz takes Youkinna prisoner, whose evil designs he suspected, 246. He is killed by his two sons, 248.

THOMAS, son-in-law to the emperor Heraclius, prevails on the inhabitants of Damascus to defend themselves against the Arabians, 129. He heads the troops and makes a sally, *ibid.* Receives a wound, and is forced to quit the field, 131. Makes a second sally which is unsuccessful to him, 133. He resolves to quit Damascus in order to go to Antioch, 141. What conditions he obtains, *ibid.* He begins his march, followed by a great number of the inhabitants, 142. He receives orders from the emperor to come to Constantinople, 148. He is attacked by Khaled, his troops are defeated, and he is killed, 150.

TULEIHAN saves Sergiabil's life, 281. Who he was, *ibid.* note.

V.

VERDAN, Amru's slave, procures his master's liberty, 296.

VERDANUS, the emperor's general, goes to the relief of Damascus, at the head of 100,000 men, 94. His army is cut in pieces, 98. He retires to Ainadin, 99. Returns against the Arabians with a new army, *ibid.* Misses an opportunity of attacking them to advantage, 110. He animates his troops before he attacks the Arabians, 116. Sends a deputy to Khaled, and makes proposals which are rejected, *ibid.* He demands a conference of Khaled, who grants it, 118. He designs to have Khaled assassinated during the conference, 119. He goes to the place of rendezvous, where he is surprized by some Arabians, who had before killed the Greeks, and laid an ambush in the same place, 122. He is killed, 123.

W.

WARS (holy) name given by the Mussulmen to all such wars as they undertake with design to propagate their religion, 60.

WATHEK-EBN-MOSSAFER undertakes to assassinate the Caliph, 259. Misses the opportunity, *ibid.* Turns Mahometan, 260.

WINE, the use of it forbidden by the law of Mahomet, 169, note. Reason for that prohibition, *ibid.* Some interpreters mollify it, *ibid.* Punishment inflicted on those who had broken that law, *ibid.*

WOMEN (Arabian) their cruelty, 19. Are taught to handle arms, 106, 130. They go to the wars, 115, 208.

Y.

YATREB, a city of Arabia Deserta, afterwards called Medina-al-Nabi, and now Medina, 13.

YERMOUK, a city of Syria, on the river Yermouk, where the Arabians gain a compleat victory over the Greeks, 208.

YEZID-EBN-ABI-SOFIAN is appointed to command the mussulman army sent into Syria, 61. He gains an advantage over the Grecians, 64. Receives orders to quit the territory of Balna, and join the grand army of the Arabians, 100. He commands the baggage guard at the battle of Ainadin, 115. He is taken prisoner, 202. Khaled obtains his liberty, 207. He commands a detachment appointed to facilitate the taking of Tyre, 284. His death, 287.

YOUKINNA, governor of Aleppo, disdainfully rejects the proposal of surrendering to the Mahometans, 228. Makes a sally with success, 229. Maltreats the inhabitants, who during his absence had parlied with the Mussulmen, 232. He retires to the castle, where he is besieged by Khaled, 233. Account of the gallant defence he made of the citadel, *ibid.* Which is taken by surprize, 238. He embraces Mahometism, 242. Means he used to get possession of Aazaz, 243. His treachery is discovered, and he is taken prisoner, 245. He regains his liberty, and delivers up the fortress to the Arabians, 248. He goes to Antioch with a view of being useful to the Mussulmen, 251. Is brought before the emperor, who being deceived by his feigned repentance, takes him again into favour, 252. He is appointed to escort Heraclius's daughter, 254. Saves the mahometan prisoners lives, 262. His treacherous dealings occasion the Mussulmen to gain a victory over the Christians, 265. He seizes Tripoli, and intending to make himself master of Tyre, is discovered and arrested, 283. Is set at liberty by the perfidious Basil, and facilitates the taking of the city by the Mahometans, 284.

Z.

ZACAT, a tax commanded to be paid by the law of Mahomet, 55.

ZOBEIR, the first that entered Mesrah, 293. Is appointed one of the electors for chusing a successor to Omar, 308.



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